

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS FOR URBANIZATION IN CHINA:
INCLUSION, EMPOWERMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

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By

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ABSTRACT

The twentieth century has been characterized by rapid urbanization accompanied by enormous urban growth and massive rural-to-urban migration around the world. The state-led urban expansion model of economic development that shapes China's contemporary economy, systematically excludes farmers in general, and left-behind female farmers in particular, from its urbanization processes. Without integrating its large rural population into urban development, China is limiting its capacity for sustainable economic growth. Hence, if China aspires to become a high-income country by rebalancing its development strategies in more inclusive, equitable and sustainable directions, moving toward a more farmer-oriented urbanization pathway is vital. Given that male out-migration and females being left behind are the outcomes of gender inequalities within and beyond rural households, left-behind women, who are even more left out of policy discourses than men, need to be integrated into more inclusive approaches to urbanization planning. However, China's land-driven, top-down model of urban development may systematically prevent the emergence of bottom-up approaches that would allow farmers to participate more fully in and to benefit from urbanization. To tackle these problems, this dissertation incorporates Friedmann's alternative development framework, which is centered on inclusion, empowerment, gender equity and sustainability, to guide a holistic and systematic analysis. Through a case study of Chongqing, this dissertation first examines how one local state utilizes land resources to facilitate more people-oriented urbanization, rather than merely extracting land revenue. Subsequently, it also examines opportunities for left-behind women to develop self-empowerment through a comparison between left-behind and non-left-behind women's empowerment status, using the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index. Finally, integrated urbanization practices, centered on inclusion, sustainable development, and gender equity, are examined for their relevance to possible alternative urbanization pathways in China. The results of the two studies confirm that such pathways could evolve from China's current practices in ways that are compatible with its present model of state capitalism, while fulfilling its aspirations for securing a socialist market economy. With an exclusive focus on the agency of farmers overall and then female farmers, specifically, this dissertation fills an existing research gap by providing a ground-up analysis of integrated alternative urbanization pathways in China, which depart from current economy-maximizing approaches.

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“Where there is a will, there is a way”

有志者事竟成

Six years is not a short period of time during one’s life. It represents half of a Chinese zodiac circle, and two years of practice after four years of professional training for a dentist or a paralegal. The truth is, no matter how hard you try to make good or bad use of your time, the length of this period is fixed and you bear all of the opportunity costs. For me, I spent the same time to do only one thing – pursuing my PhD degree. I may be not as wealthy and successful as some of my friends, but I will never regret the time I invested. As I am able to think through the meaning of my life and to extend and go beyond the breadth of the time, I have come to value what I have gained by learning, experiencing and interacting with people and conditions around me in relation to family, school, community, and wider societal contexts.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

5DE	Five Domains of Empowerment
ACWF	All-China Women's Federation
CHIPS	China Household Income Projects
CNHS	China National Rural Survey
CPC	Communist Party of China
CSNE	Department of Comprehensive Statistics of the National Economy
DRC	Development Research Center of the State Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GAD	Gender and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGI	Gender Gap Index
GNI	Gross National Income
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HCRS	House Contract Responsibility System
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG3	The Third Millennium Development Goals
MOHURD	Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of PRC
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NDRC	National Development and Reform Commission
NELM	New Economics of Labor Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIE	Newly Industrialized Economy
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and

	Development
OPHDI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PHE	Department of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health
PRC	People's Republic of China
SDR	Special Drawing Rights
TVE	Township and Village Enterprise
UNDESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs of United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNU-WIDER	United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WAD	Women and Development
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WID	Women in Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter describes the historical background and theoretical considerations informing the dissertation; it identifies the problems, defines the research questions, and provides a rationale for using a holistic alternative development framework to guide the investigation of urbanization patterns in China, based on a selective literature review. Then, it explains the methodologies adopted and outlines the structure of the dissertation.

Unlike a conventional PhD thesis, this is a manuscript-style dissertation that contains two independent, but linked papers, as chapters 2 and 3. Under the general theme of exploring alternative pathways for urbanization in China, each chapter also focuses on one aspect of designing revised approaches to current patterns, practices, and policies. More specifically, chapter 2 explores how to draw upon initiatives already available in China to move toward more inclusive and sustainable development through policies that facilitate farming families to integrate more fully into urbanization processes, while chapter 3 examines gender equity in rural regions by analyzing left-behind women's self-empowerment in agriculture. Chapter 4 concludes and presents the theoretical and policy implications of the dissertation.

1.1 Background

For nearly four decades, China's economic development has grown at a remarkable pace. China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate has remained in the double digits for nearly 20 years (World Bank, 2015). By 2010, China had become the second largest economy in the World, measured by GDP (Hua, 2014). It is estimated that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in China averaged 42 billion USD from 1997 until 2016, reaching an all-time high of 126 billion USD in 2015 (Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, 2016). In the same year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) officially included Yuan as one of the few currencies with Special Drawing Rights (SDR), which means that it has become one of the dominant world currencies, similar to US Dollars, Japanese Yen, and Euros.

Although China has gained an international reputation for its outstanding economic performance, it has also faced great global and domestic challenges in order to sustain such high growth. China has responded to these challenges with a number of policy initiatives in its efforts

to pass over the “middle-income” trap,¹ a form of stagnation in economic growth that prevents many developing nations from sustaining their high-income rankings.

Following WWII, only five Newly Industrialized Economies (NIEs), including Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong (China) and Taiwan (China), managed to avoid falling into the middle-income trap. According to the Commission on Growth and Development (2008), inclusive development and sustained economic growth were considered to be two key elements contributing to the success stories of these five nations or regions in attaining and retaining their high-income status. A country is considered to have sustainable growth if it can achieve a minimum 7% increase in GDP annually and keep that up for 25 years or more, while inclusive development assures people and their children share fully in the benefits associated with growth (Commission on Growth and Development, 2008). The interaction between inclusive development and sustainable growth is well illustrated in the development histories of Korea and Taiwan (China). Both nations (areas) first accomplished democratic transition in the late 1980s, which provided them with inclusive development mechanisms that supported their fast economic growth. To gauge the outcome of inclusion, the Gini Coefficient,² which measures the inequality of income distribution within a nation, is used as an approximate instrument. A score of 1 represents absolute inequality of income distribution, while a lower score shows a more favorable inclusion condition. As shown by United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research [UNU-WIDER] (2015), during 1978 and 2014, the Gini coefficients of both Korea and Taiwan (China) remained almost flat between 0.28 and 0.37, while Gini coefficients of Argentina, Brazil and Chile have fluctuated between 0.36 and 0.61, reflecting their greater domestic income inequality as compared with the two Asian economies. Inclusion is one part of the story; growth is the other. In the case of Korea and Chinese Taiwan, both have sustained high rates of growth for the last few decades and reached a stable urbanization level of 80% at the

¹ The middle-income trap refers to a phenomenon where, in the postwar era, many countries managed to reach middle-income status, but few have continued on to become high-income economies and have thus experienced a sharp slowdown in growth. According to the World Bank (2014), middle-income economies are those with a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita falling between \$1045 and \$12736.

² Gini coefficient is a measure of the income distribution of a nation's residents and is often used to measure income inequality. It is defined as a ratio with values between 0 and 1, where 0 corresponds to perfect income equality and 1 corresponds to extreme income inequality. For calculation method, see Lerman and Yitzhaki (1984).

beginning of the 1990s, maintaining their sustainable and inclusive growth profiles ever since (Hua, 2014; Wen, 2014).

In the case of China, the shrinking global market, due to the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, has placed great pressure on China's exporting sectors, which are major drivers of its economic growth. As a result, China's growth rate has fallen to less than 10% annually and sank to 6.9% in 2015 (World Bank, 2015). Thus, China is confronted with great international challenges to maintaining its continuous high growth.

Domestically, the rise in socioeconomic inequality that has accompanied national market reform and economic growth poses a great threat to China's social stability, which may further slow its economic development, as not all members of the population have enjoyed similar opportunities to thrive, and thereby contribute to overall prosperity (Hua, 2014). The national Gini coefficient was 0.38 in 1988 (Griffin & Zhao, 1988) and 0.49 in 2002 (Li, 2002), reaching a peak value of 0.52 in 2011 (UNU-WIDER, 2015). Unlike the pre-reform era, where absolute poverty was extensive and evenly distributed among regions, China's marketization and urbanization have generated new forms of poverty and created visibly marginalized groups, including migrant workers, farmers, and female farmers, in particular (Fan, 2003; 2008; Zhang, Wang & Sander, 2007). Given that rural migrants and farmers represent nearly 70% of the total population, and are absorbing the brunt of increasing rural-urban income disparity (Wang & Cai, 2010), their relative poverty status compared to urban citizens further limits the growth of domestic consumption, which is considered one of the key drivers necessary for China to maintain its growth during global recession (Hua, 2014, Huang, 2011). Furthermore, rapid urbanization and economic growth have also spawned more prominent environmental issues for China. According to Liu & Diamond (2005), China ranked 129th of the 142 countries in measures of environmental sustainability. Most recently, China became the world's deadliest country for outdoor air pollution, which killed nearly one million people in 2012 (Department of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health [PHE], 2016). Given China's extreme social inequities, limited domestic demand, and environmental degradation, its past development patterns are unsustainable.

There are many attempts underway to tackle the challenges facing China, emerging from diverse disciplines. Drawing lessons from developing countries and NIEs, Lin (2009) concludes that China's rapid development has been following a dual-track pathway, where the state plays a

strong role in promoting economic growth while capital accumulation in private sectors also increases. For China to overcome the challenges outlined above, it may need to consider completing the transition from a dual-track development to a well-functioning market economy, to reduce the effects of market distortions (Lin, 2009). While China may continue marketization for the sake of promoting its economic growth, the market system alone may not address all the issues it faces. Even though a market economy has been built up in most socialist countries that are in transition toward greater participation in economic globalization, the right to distribute many key elements of the market system still remains in the hands of their governments (Szelenyi, 2011). Furthermore, social inequality may be reinforced by the market transition to generate even worse conditions, as has been the case in China and other transitional countries (Huang, 2012). This is due to the fact that the monopoly of the state in most former socialist countries created or exacerbated social inequalities by squeezing the living space for civil society or any other organized social activities during the process of marketization (Sun, 2008). When there is no effective regulation of market transition, the market tends to work for efficiency at the expense of equity, resulting in further social disparities, as is certainly the case in Russia and Eastern Europe (Szelenyi, 2008; 2011).

While international paradigms, discourses or practices may have an impact on a nation's growth and development policies, the desired outcomes may be more likely to occur when the national authority approves them and can integrate them into local systems (Hayami & Godo, 2005). Focusing on China's political economy, two different phrases have been widely used to describe its economic development pattern during the reform era; these are: "state capitalism" and "socialist market economy" (Huang, 2012; Qian & Wu, 2008). The term "state capitalism" highlights the significant role of the state in managing a nation's economy with capitalist characteristics. Unlike other socialist countries that adopted capitalist systems and partially or entirely completed their democratic transformation at an earlier stage, China has attempted to engage all attributes of a capitalist economy without moving toward democratic institutions (Coarse & Wang, 2012; Tsai, 2007). Even though political transformation occurs slowly at all levels of government where the state intervenes in the economy using capitalist logics, the Communist Party of China (CPC) still maintains its absolute power in China's multi-level political settings (Nee & Oppen, 2012). The so-called "socialist market economy," which is advocated for and claimed by Chinese officials, is centered on the idea that economic growth

with capitalist characteristics is allowed, as long as it supports socialist purposes and operates under the control of the CPC (Coarse & Wang, 2012). However, a retrospective review of China's development path indicates that its political economy is more like "state capitalism," rather than a "socialist market economy" (Huang, 2012). Consequently, whether China is going to continue its current version of state capitalism, move toward a more authentically socialist market economy, or transform itself toward a more inclusive democracy, is still the subject of heated debate (Coarse & Wang, 2012; Qian & Wu, 2008; Wong, 2007).

Unlike most of the available literature, which investigates the issue of China's development from the perspective of its political economy, or through the lens of new institutional economics (Huang, 2012; Tsai, 2007), this study attempts to contribute to on-going policy discussions through a close examination of urbanization processes in China. As indicated, China's increasing integration into the global economy, its continuous economic liberalism, and its policies designed to support economic development have favored rapid urbanization and economic growth (McGranahan & Tacoli, 2006; Wen, 2014). Consequently, China's urbanization is not only a reflection of its political economy and the dynamic relationship among key players involved in its land tenure system; its model of urbanization is also a significant contributor to China's current challenges, which includes over-investment in state assets, weak domestic consumption and persistent social inequality (Zhou, 2014).

Globally, urbanization is a worldwide trend as well as a strategic national development pathway for attaining high-income rankings. The world population has reached 6.97 billion, and 52 percent of the total lived in the urban areas by 2011 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs of United Nations [UNDESA], 2011). China is no exception. Since 1978, its economic development has featured rapid urbanization characterized by enormous rural-urban migration. By 2011, the official urban population of China reached 51 percent of the total population (Development Research Center of the State Council [DRC], 2011), including migrant residents living in cities for more than half the year. Comparatively, as shown during the take-off phases of economic growth in Chinese Taiwan and South Korea, each of them started urbanization at the levels of 28% and 40%, respectively, in the 1950s. Attaining stable urbanization at nearly 80% in the 1980s, the two countries (areas) also achieved high-income rankings and established democratic institutions during the same period (Perkins, 2010).

Domestically, promoting urbanization is widely considered to be one of the major drivers for China's rapid economic growth and continues to be a key instrument used to address China's imbalanced development pattern. Urbanization was first stated as an objective in China's 10th Five-Year Plan for Social and Economic Development (2001-2005) and has been emphasized and carried through until the most recent 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020). Despite this emphasis on urbanization, however, unchecked social polarization constrains domestic consumption power, which could otherwise provide a buffer against shocks in global capital systems. In effect, China cannot realize its ambitions for full modernization and industrialization while leaving large rural populations engaged in the agricultural economy as small peasant farmers (Hua, 2014). Constrained by many factors, such as great regional as well as rural-urban disparities, and institutional obstacles arising from its previous planned economy, China's population remains systemically under-urbanized, as measured against Western and other developing countries' experiences (Au & Henderson, 2002; Zhang, 2004). More specifically, China's distorted urbanization model features an under-urbanization of farmers, caused by historical institutions left over from its centralized planning regime, while an over-urbanization of land has been enhanced by states' investments in urban infrastructure (Hua, 2014; Ong, 2014).

The hukou and land tenure systems are widely accepted as the two critical institutional barriers contributing to China's distorted urbanization patterns (Au & Henderson, 2002; Tao & Xu, 2007). The hukou system has been established in China since the 1950s, aiming to prevent free movement of farmers out of rural areas in order to establish and maintain an exclusive employment system located in urban sectors (Cai, 2011). Under this system, individuals are entitled to an official hukou identity based on their geographic origin of birth, with farmers having rural hukou and urban citizens owning urban hukou. Hukou identity determines, among other privileges and exclusions, access to social services in any specific geographic area. Thus, the hukou system artificially produces a rural-urban divide within China, where urban citizens can fully enjoy urban social welfare programs while rural villagers are normally excluded from, or enjoy only parts of, these benefits.

While the hukou system creates hardships for farmers seeking to settle in cities, the land tenure system ties villagers to their rural land base and further marginalizes farmers when the state requisitions rural land for development purposes. Due to China's socialist regime, rural farmland is collectively owned, which means that individual farmers do not own the land they

cultivate privately, although their fates are associated with their hukou status. Thus, farmers cannot claim any property rights over land when negotiating its sale for urbanization purposes with the state (Rozelle & Li, 1998). Consequently, farmers are further marginalized from policy-making processes and become invisible during land conversion for urban development. Due to the state's monopoly over the rural land conversion and their authority to claim revenue from rural-urban land conversions, local states are motivated to engage in increasing land-based urban expansion, in hopes of continuously extracting land revenue, without due consideration to the impact on affected rural populations (Ong, 2014).

Thus, due to both the hukou and land tenure systems, China's current urbanization process is characterized by over-urbanization of farmland, while under-urbanizing farmers (Hua, 2014; Wen, 2014). Between 1990 and 2008, China's urban construction area increased from 12,900 km² to 36,300 km² representing an expansion of 181%. Meanwhile, urban real estate areas have grown from 2 billion m² to 11.9 billion m², indicating a total growth of 600% (Department of Comprehensive Statistics of the National Economy [CSNE], 2009; NBS, 2009). However, during the same period, the actual human urbanization rate, excluding rural populations living in cities, but without hukou, only rose from 26.4% to 32.9%, an increase of only 25%, overall. Thus, the significant gap between the increased urban land base and a total population of urban hukou holders confirms a land-biased rather than a people-oriented urbanization pattern.

As the gap between China's overall urban population and percentage of urban hukou holders widens, the negative impacts of the hukou system on national socioeconomic development are becoming increasingly serious and pervasive. In addition to increasing inequality between rural and urban regions (Li, 1999; Wu & Treiman, 2004), the hukou system has resulted in widespread social discrimination against migrant workers living in cities as well as farmers remaining in rural areas (Solinger, 1999; Alexander & Chan, 2004). Hukou also contributes to the poor total economic performance by restricting the free movement of laborers (Cai, 2001; Au & Henderson, 2002). To address these issues, adjustments have been made to the hukou system in efforts to sustain China's economic growth. However, after years of heated debates and constant adjustments, the hukou system still remains in effect and is not likely to be abandoned in the near future (Chan & Buckingham, 2008).

Due to the state's monopoly on land requisition and the lack of private ownership of rural land, local states play dominant roles in land conversion from rural to urban purposes, extracting

high land-lease revenue from developers (Ong, 2014). The land conversion income, in turn, motivates local states to engage increasingly in developing sprawling urban-built areas through massive rural land requisition. As a result, peasant farmers, who are in subordinate positions relative to the state, are still being left out of much of the policy and research discourse on development in China (Zhou, 2014). During state-led land requisition from 1987 to 2010, more than 52 million displaced peasants, without proper compensation from the government, represented one of the key manifestations of this institutional socio-political power imbalance (Ong, 2014). Furthermore, since 2000, peasant protests have become the main expression of social unease in China. For example, land disputes accounted for 65 percent of the 180,000 mass disturbances in 2010 (Yu, 2005). On the side of the state, the increased demand for local infrastructure development also places an increasing debt burden on local governments. The total amount of local borrowing was estimated to range from 5 to 14 trillion Yuan, accounting for between 13 and 36 percent of the national GDP (Shih, 2010), which is significant. Thus, China's under-urbanization of its human population does not only systemically excludes farming families from sharing in and contributing to its economic development; it also deters China's capacity for sustaining high economic growth, increases municipal debts, and causes social instability within the nation.

Owing mainly to hukou and land tenure systems, rural-urban circular migration also has a significant impact on the socioeconomic landscape of rural China (Fan, 2004). While farmers, as well as migrant workers, are generally left out of the policy discussions that inform China's urbanization, female farmers, who are normally invisible in public policy platforms and discussions, may be even further left behind during China's urbanization processes. Labor migration and being left-behind are actually two sides of the same coin (Jacka, 2012; Toyato, Yeoh & Nguyen, 2007). While men are most likely to engage in temporary migration, most women, the elderly and children are strategically left behind to cope in rural areas (Jacka, 2014). Due to its patriarchal culture and the Confucian ethics embedded in Chinese society, it is the left-behind women who end up taking care of the family and operating agricultural production under China's current model of urbanization (Fan, 2003; 2008). However, relative to the substantive available research on rural-urban migration, very limited numbers of studies focus on left-behind women's issues (Jacka & Sargeson, 2011). Among the available studies on women, most have tended toward a negative conceptualization of the experiences of left-behind women in Chinese

society (Jacka, 2014). While portraying left-behind women as a marginalized group may be helpful in raising public awareness in order to improve their living conditions, merely providing left-behind women with a public profile and limited social aids may also exacerbate their situations, and trap them in the current rural poverty loop (Murphy, 2004; Jacka, 2014). As a result, left-behind women are further marginalized and rendered invisible in policy planning, and opportunities to enhance their participation in economic growth are foregone.

1.2 Problem definition and research questions

For the last three decades, China's rapid urbanization, accompanied by local states' investments in infrastructure and a constant cycling of rural-urban migration, have fuelled its high economic growth (Huang, 2012). However, China's overall transfer of rural populations to the status of urban citizens is systemically undersized due to the socioeconomic systems developed during its central planning period (Au & Henderson, 2002; Zhang, 2004). The state-led urban growth model of economic development that characterizes China's economy has gradually led the urbanization process to a place where its land-biased approaches, which limit investments in human development, systematically exclude farmers in general, and female farmers in particular, from the process. By excluding such a large proportion of its rural population from integrating into urban life and substantive rural development, China is also limiting capacity for economic growth in the largest proportion of its labor force. Given the declining global market and rapidly growing social inequality, it is imperative for China to rebalance its development strategies in more inclusive, equitable and sustainable directions, re-imagining a farmer-friendly, people-oriented urbanization model that taps the potential creative and consumptive power of the large rural population.

Even though, since 1978, the central government has continuously decentralized its control in hukou and land tenure systems in order to promote urbanization, it is not likely to give up its absolute ruling power in the near future. In this sense, China's land-biased urbanization, induced by a top-down approach, may inherently prevent the emergence of bottom-up approaches that might be initiated by the large rural population, which would allow farmers to participate fully in and benefit from urbanization. Furthermore, given the enormous land revenue and the strong role of local states in both hukou and land tenure reforms, it remains extremely challenging for China to switch from land-biased to people-oriented urbanization patterns completely. Nevertheless, in order for China to move toward a more people-oriented approach to

development, policy solutions should originate from its own experience and remain compatible with its evolving political economy, as well.

As China increasingly integrates into the global economy, its socioeconomic challenges cannot be examined in isolation. Based on the experiences of the five NIEs that have escaped the middle-income trap, it has been demonstrated that high levels of urbanization, the adoption of democratic institutions, and continuous economic growth at a high pace are all key factors contributing to their sustained and inclusive economic development. While establishing democracy may create stronger mechanisms for social inclusion within a nation, whether they lead definitively to inclusive and equitable development may be in question (Wong, 2007). Based on China's previous development trajectory and its unique political economy, it is very unlikely that China will transform to democracy shortly. Due to the considerable political obstacles that Chinese policy-makers face in rebalancing the political economy, a more state-centric approach remains necessary (McNally, 2013; Sun, 2008). If China aspires to become one of the high-income countries, speeding up the urbanization of farmers and migrant workers, while rebalancing its state-led urbanization to create a more inclusive and equitable model, appears to be the right move.

This argument leads to the research question: What are some of the promising alternative options available for China to move towards a more people-oriented model of urbanization, given its mainstream political and economic structures? More specifically, two primary sets of questions informing the present research are:

- Given China's current land-biased urbanization, how can it best utilize and re-construct land resources, creating new opportunity structures and access so that farmers excluded from full participation in urbanization, may come to fully participate in and influence decisions that affect them, in order to integrate more effectively into better, more inclusive and people-oriented sustainable urbanization processes?
- For those left-behind in rural areas, especially women, how does the current state of being away from their husbands affect their empowerment or disempowerment? What conditions contribute to left-behind women's (dis) empowerment and what can be done to facilitate their greater empowerment in the process of urbanization? How might being left behind serve as a source of empowerment for Chinese women, if they can take advantage of new opportunities, thereby obtaining greater access to decision-making and income in

agriculture than before? What quantifiable evidence might be gathered to clarify whether left-behind women are more empowered in agriculture than non-left-behind women in rural China, relative to their male partners?

The answers to these questions may suggest steering China's urbanization in a direction that is centered on promoting farmers' participation in, and greater gender equity during, urbanization processes. Given that China's recent development has been following a capitalist paradigm of marketization, an alternative development approach, which originated from the failure of capitalist development in addressing social exclusion and poverty in the late 1960s, may provide a useful guide for possible policy development, featuring people-oriented urbanization in China.

Alternative development discourse identifies and advocates alternative practices and redefines the goals of development to focus on people's socioeconomic well-being rather than merely promoting national economic growth (Brun, Blaikie & Jones, 2014; Watts, 2003). Despite changing geopolitics, and shifting developmental priorities and discourses, alternative development still keeps up with current socioeconomic injustices and is relevant in evolving development discourses and policy practices. While alternative development discourse plays a key role in balancing between growth-maximizing approaches and more people-oriented methods, it also faces critiques from professional practitioners and academics (Pieterse, 1998). Most of the critical commentary on alternative development focuses on its limited attention to the diversity within civil society, the economic dimensions of proposed alternatives, the potential importance of the local state in shaping conditions for development, and a lack of theoretical cohesion, arising from the diverse geopolitical conditions under which economic development occurs (Bebbington & Bebbington, 2001; Pieterse, 1998). However, given that alternative development enables the formation of alternative visions and pathways toward participatory collaboration with marginalized populations – a consideration often missing in China's policy development structures – adopting such an approach may help unravel the socioeconomic barriers faced by socially excluded farmers, thus promoting more people-oriented urbanization processes in China.

For this dissertation, Friedmann's (1992) alternative development framework, which is centered on inclusion, empowerment, gender equity and sustainability, is incorporated as a guide to the analysis. Friedmann's (1992) work has been influential in key areas of alternative development, such as 'social practice,' 'participation' and 'empowerment' (Brun, Blaikie &

Jones, 2014; Islam, 2015). Furthermore, as a distinguished planning theorist in sustainable development, his contributions to critical discussions in the field moving from overly-instrumentalized models of efficiency in policy design toward more communicative and connective rationales for fostering socioeconomic inclusion in development (Amdam, 2010; Friedmann, 1973; 1985). In particular, Friedmann's (1985) focus on transactive planning, which incorporates people's lived experiences into policy development and social practice, is of interest for the present study. This is because policies that facilitate the social agency of marginalized groups are more likely to lead to desired results when people obtain a strong internalized sense of their own capacities for exercising agency (Friedmann, 1985; 1987).

According to Friedmann (1992), social practice could be seen to take place in four overlapping domains: the state, civil society, market economy and the political community. Consequently, alternative development can be realized through the social, economic, political and intergenerational participation of marginalized populations in the "whole economy" (Friedmann, 1992). While pursuing alternative visions and solutions to mainstream growth-maximizing models, alternative development requires the state to play a strong role, without necessarily replacing the dominant political-economic structure (Amdam, 2010). Therefore, Friedmann's (1992) alternative approaches are compatible with China's current political economy and associated urbanization practices.

Particularly, Friedmann (1992) adopted a holistic approach to describe how empowerment operated in modernization processes, when instrumental top-down policies dominated communicative bottom-up strategies, thereby systematically excluding a large part of the population from economic and political power. Thus, drawing on Friedmann's (1992) alternative framework enables a systemic exploration of the motives, behavior and interaction among all participants, including the state, market, private corporations, and rural laborers during China's urbanization. Moreover, Friedmann's (1992) solutions emerge from aiming toward a better balance between mainstream development approaches and the growth of a civil society, via empowerment of the disempowered. Thus, Friedmann's (1992) alternative framework offers critical guidance and helpful approaches to the task of rebalancing China's land-biased urbanization, since it shares similar analytical reasoning with China's urbanization processes and is compatible with the predominant political economy in China.

According to Friedmann (1992), empowerment, as a gathering of power in a combination of external supports and internal mobilization, is the necessary pathway for marginalized people to integrate into, and thereby transform, mainstream development platforms (Amdam, 2010; Torri & Martinez, 2014). On the one hand, power can be transferred from the powerful to the powerless, indicating a top-down version of empowerment. On the other hand, power may be created internally within the people, who previously perceived themselves as powerless, showing a bottom-up form of empowerment. In line with Friedmann's (1992) alternative development framework, which is centered on empowerment, this study examines how the state can utilize land resources to supply policy support for farmer-oriented urbanization in one essay, while investigating opportunities for rural left-behind women to develop internalized empowerment and greater social agency by taking up newly available leadership roles in their households and communities, in another. Consequently, alternative urbanization practices centered on inclusion, empowerment, and sustainability are proposed for China, and carefully examined in these two essays.

1.3 Alternative perspectives of development and urbanization in China

Recognizing that alternative development may offer a constructive way to redirect land-driven urbanization in China toward a more inclusive model, it is necessary to have a better understanding of the historical and current trends in alternative theories of development. To this end, this section first reviews the origin, key ideas and the evolution of alternative development literature following an explanation of Friedmann's (1992) alternative framework. Then, taking into account broader international experience and China's socioeconomic environment and political regime, the implications for alternative urbanization in China are explored and presented.

1.3.1 Origin, key ideas, and trending of alternative development

In the late 1960s, international development paradigms shifted from a growth-maximization doctrine toward alternative frameworks, more committed to people-oriented development, and policies designed to operate in harmony with the social dimensions of economic growth and environmental sustainability (Friedmann, 1992; Watts, 2003). Alternative development ideas originated from the failures of mainstream development paradigms to alleviate worldwide poverty, which focused too narrowly on maximizing national economic performance (Brun, Blaikie & Jones, 2014; Savini, 2011). The establishment of United Nations Environment

Program (UNEP) in 1972 is considered a milestone event in this shift (Friedmann, 1992). Since then, alternative development models, focusing on inclusion, empowerment, balanced development, gender equity and sustainability, have been accepted as a more sustainable pathway for development than the mainstream development approaches, and are gaining in popularity (Pieterse, 1988; Islam, 2015).

Challenging the increasing marginalization and exploitation induced by capital accumulation, alternative development frameworks concern themselves with finding alternatives to mainstream development thinking and practice, and understanding how these alternatives may affect local as well as global processes of human marginalization (Amdam, 2010). The main target of alternative development is to improve the livelihood³ of marginalized people, thereby contributing to overall prosperity. According to Brun, Blaikie, and Jones (2014), marginalization referred to exclusion from resources, decision-making and rights that limited people's capacity for making strategic decisions that were important to their livelihoods. Thus, alternative approaches are intended to challenge the status quo that reproduces marginalization, by affirming the moral claims of, and justice for, the disempowered (Torri & Martinez, 2013).

Whether alternative development can keep up with the current socioeconomic injustices, thereby reducing marginalization and exploitation, determines its relevance in development discourses and practices. In this sense, it is necessary to consider its legacy and founding themes and how these have evolved and been extended in more recent discussions. The foundational themes of alternative development include: engaging local communities through participation, finding solutions to poverty and gender inequalities, preserving the environment, and promoting economic sustainability (Friedmann, 1992; Lie & Lund, 1995; Torri & Martinez, 2011). Emergent areas address globalization, rights-based approaches to development, conflict-resolution, forced migration and climate change (Brun, Blaikie & Jones, 2014; Islam, 2015; Lund, 1993).

Feminism, post-colonialism, and post-development theories also shape current development discourses and generate alternative perspectives of local, regional, national and global economic development (Brun, Blaikie & Jones, 2014; Simon, 2007). In the past three decades, feminist perspectives on development have emerged to offer critical engagements with the aspirations of alternative development models, leading to a pluralist field of inquiry and

³ According to Ellis (2000), livelihood comprised "the assets, the activities, and the access to these that together determine the living gained by the individual or household" (p. 10).

practice (Eide, 2014). According to Moser (1993) and Rowlands (1988), since the 1970s, feminist responses to the persistent marginalization of women under globalization has largely been formulated through emerging approaches to women's participation in decision-making processes, such as 'women in development' (WID), 'women and development' (WAD) and 'gender and development' (GAD). These frameworks have been elaborated and integrated into development discourses and a wide range of academic fields, generating transformative impacts on theories of alternative development and advocating for the full participation of marginalized peoples, especially women, in changing national contexts (Attanapola, 2014; Mohanty, 1988). Post-colonialist critiques, arising from national struggles for independence from imperialist regimes, have also contributed to theories of alternative development, through analysis of persistent patterns of global domination and the transformative power of bottom-up resistance (Pieterse, 1998). Drawing upon critiques arising from feminism and post-colonialism, post-development theory takes a more radical departure from the prevailing conceptualizations and practices of neoliberal development (Simon, 2007). It advocates complete rejection of development, as it is rooted in Anglo-American global dominance and guided by logics arising from the dominant developed countries.

Despite shifting socioeconomic contexts, changing geopolitics and evolving developmental priorities and paradigms, alternative development has been promoting a continued focus on inclusion, reducing marginalization, and making moral adjustments to economic planning and policy making (Amdam, 2010; Simon, 2007). According to Hickey and Mohan (2005), alternative development enabled the formation of alternative visions and pathways toward participatory forms of state-individual interaction, which could be applied to many jurisdictions where marginalization and exploitation were present. However, given the increasing importance of alternative development discourses in critical engagements with neoliberal globalization, very few comprehensive analytical frameworks are available to examine and guide the development of policy approaches. Among available studies, Friedmann's (1992) alternative development framework, which seeks to achieve social, political, economic and intergenerational integration through growing a civil society that is primarily built and sustained by the interests of marginalized people, may be a good option.

1.3.2 Friedmann's framework and its relevance to urbanization in developing countries

Based on extensive experience in Latin America, Friedmann (1992) described a general transformation of the peasantry in capitalist development regimes that was different from the mainstream economic development models. Most neoclassic economists depict urbanization as continuous, imagining complete absorption of the rural surplus labor force through capital accumulation in urban economies (Harris & Todaro, 1970; Lewis, 1954; Ranis & Fei, 1961). Friedmann (1992) argued that most rural laborers became redundant under capital accumulation paradigms through reviewing the socioeconomic outcomes of economic development and urbanization in most Latin American countries. Consequently, rural peasants are systemically excluded from policy-making at all levels, and the social support required for them to survive is adopted primarily on a moral basis. Most of the urban slums in impoverished countries are the result of continuous marginalization and exclusion of peasants with small land holdings, landless peasants, and peasant farmers, resulting from policy-making platforms that could potentially improve their disadvantaged status if re-imagined for greater inclusion. The exclusion of rural laborers from both economics and politics may improve total productivity in the relatively short term while appearing to demonstrate state conformity to contemporary measures of economic growth. However, sustaining high economic growth can never be realized by leaving the majority of the population behind in sectors that cannot keep up with current economic growth.

This is especially true for most developing countries that hope to increase their economic growth to catch up with the developed countries through rapid urbanization. While moving rural villagers to urban areas is necessary for capital accumulation to occur and to support an economy of scale for growing consumer production, the growth-maximizing approach alone tends to create increasing social inequalities, political unrest, and over-consumption of natural resources (Friedmann, 1992). Coupled with increasing environmental deterioration, the development of these countries cannot be sustained. In this sense, alternative development theory remains relevant to understanding how to promote balanced urbanization processes and to generate more viable ways to get there.

To address what he considered as a major deficiency of the conventional economic growth model, Friedmann (1992) proposed a whole-economy model that incorporated the mainstream pattern of economic growth and non-market relations in the production of life and livelihood. The household is the basic unit in this model, conceived as the level at which human

life is lived. Meanwhile, a civil society that takes household livelihood as priority may emerge to compete and balance with the market economy (Amdam, 2010). Integrating civil society into the whole-economy model, Friedmann (1992) proposed an alternative development framework centered on empowerment of the disempowered to achieve social, economic, political and intergenerational inclusion in the whole economy. More specifically, this foundational alternative development approach identifies four claims as to the top priorities for any nation that is willing to achieve qualitative, inclusive and sustainable growth (Amdam, 2010). The four claims are as follows:

- Inclusive Democracy

Democracy, in this context, means that people are able to organize in their political communities as well as maintaining self-sovereignty as individuals. Thus, continuous empowerment involves all poor and marginalized populations, who are generally excluded in class-dominated societies. Friedmann (1992) further argued that democracy was the fundamental requirement of an alternative form of development: “without a genuine and inclusive politic, the claims of the disempowered will not be heard” (p. 135).

- Appropriate Economic Growth

This principle includes a major shift in policies to prioritize the common interests of excluded populations. This approach requires qualitative, inclusive and balanced economic growth between rural and urban sectors, between social elites and marginalized populations.

- Gender Equality

With the household as the basic unit of civil society, equity among household members and across households is necessary. Thus, this model is committed to interpersonal and communal justice, and must also incorporate gender equality within and beyond household levels.

- Sustainability

Sustainability is not only an ultimate goal but also a necessary pathway for all nations to achieve long-lasting, accountable, qualitative and just development for all human beings. According to Friedmann (1992), sustainability could be achieved through the social, economic and political integration of all members of society into a whole economy model.

Friedman's (1992) alternative framework, featuring the four dimensions of integration of communities as well as individuals, may provide valuable insights for countries attempting to realize inclusive and sustained development as well as gender equality. However, practices and experiences in other regions informed by Friedmann's (1992) framework should also be examined to make it more valid and convincing, since the framework is mainly built on case studies in Latin American regions.

1.3.3 East Asian experience and China's market economy

Following World War II, only five Asian countries (or regions), including Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong (China) and Taiwan (China), have avoided the so-called middle-income trap, transforming into, and remaining categorized as, high-income countries. By examining the historical trajectory of these most prosperous Asian countries (regions), the Commission on Growth and Development (2008) argued that sustained growth and inclusive development were the two key factors contributing to their success. The interaction between the two factors of inclusion and sustainability is well illustrated in the development history of South Korea and Taiwan (China). During the international democratization movement in the 1970s, most Asian countries were encouraged to realize political democracy in order to "catch up" with Western developed countries in economic terms. The two countries (regions) successfully established democracy within the contexts of their primarily authoritarian governments, which provided them with inclusive development mechanism (Perkins, 2010). Other previously designated fast-growing countries, such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Philippines, also set up democracy regimes. However, they failed to integrate inclusive institutions into their political economy. Thus, when the Asian Financial Crisis occurred in 1997, these countries were trapped in the recession. Whereas, the two countries (regions) achieved continuous high growth in GDP for almost three decades, reached relatively stable urbanization levels (around 80%), maintaining a relatively low Gini coefficient around 0.34, representing relatively equitable development (Commission on Growth and Development, 2008; World Income Inequality Database, 2015).

Given the similarity between the take-off phases of Chinese Taiwan and South Korea and China's current development, which features rapid urbanization and high economic growth, China may learn lessons from its East Asian neighbors to inform its future development directions (Hua, 2014). Meanwhile, the political economy in China has similar general characteristics to those of newly industrialized countries, but it also has its unique attributes that

shape its social, economic and political structures (Coase & Wang, 2012; Naughton, 2007; Tsai, 2007).

By the end of the 1970s, strong evidence had accumulated indicating that the central planning approach adopted in China had failed miserably as a mainstream development model (Young, 2013). Since then, China has been transforming its economy from a command regime toward a more market-oriented capitalist approach. However, many institutions and practices developed under the planning economy remain (Cai, 2011), where the state continues to dominate most of the socioeconomic lives of Chinese citizens. Unlike other centralized countries, China had a long history of economic growth without the monopoly of the central government (Qian & Wang, 2008; Nee & Oppen, 2012). This embedded doctrine has been inherited and re-articulated by designating increasing responsibility to local governments as part of China's fiscal decentralization (Zhou, 2006). Given the present promotional incentives governing local officials, which are heavily based on economic performance, local corporation-like governments are strongly encouraged to promote their local economies (Huang, 2011, 2012; Jin, Qian & Weingast, 2005). This implies that each local state may initiate institutional or policy innovation, as long as it drives local economic growth. As a result, any effort to rebalance the policy environment informing China's land-driven urbanization toward more farmer-friendly, people-oriented approaches, must be undertaken with a strong understanding of how to match local governments' economic incentives.

Another feature of China's market system is that maximizing economic growth is subject to the dominance of CPC's political control (Qian & Wu, 2008). In this sense, any level of institutional change or reform in China has to be consistent with this form of rule. Even though the central government has continuously loosened its control in many fields by expanding individual freedoms, it will not give up its absolute ruling power. As China continues to integrate into the global economy and to deepen its institutional reforms, this ruling structure may evolve, but major change is not likely in the near future.

1.3.4 Alternative approaches to urbanization in China

By examining the development experiences of Latin America and East Asia as compared with what has been happening recently in China's political economy, it becomes clear that Friedmann's (1992) alternative framework may also be applied to inform approaches to rebalancing land-biased urbanization toward more farmer-friendly, people-oriented urbanization

in China. Because both support modernization featuring redistribution of rural peasant farmers, the framework shares similar analytical reasoning with China's approach to urbanization, and therefore, remains compatible with the predominant urbanization pattern in China. Furthermore, Friedmann's (1992) framework provides a holistic and people-oriented approach that could be used as a guide to enable inclusive and sustainable urbanization processes in China, while also addressing gender equity through the empowerment of farmer households in general, and left-behind women in particular.

According to Friedmann (1992), 'inclusive democracy,' 'appropriate economic growth,' and 'environmental as well as economic sustainability,' represent opportunities for political, economic and intergenerational integration of farmers into mainstream development. However, given that democracy is politically in conflict with China's socialist regime, it is important to develop measures of participation and equity that are in line with, and achievable in, local political settings. As understood through successful East Asian development experiences, 'inclusive development' and 'sustained growth' have overlapping meanings with Friedmann's (1992) claims of 'appropriate economic growth' and 'sustainability.' Both paired phrases focus on balancing the social and economic dimensions of development in the present, and environmental sustainability in the long run. Thus, inclusion remains an important dimension in promoting more farmer-oriented urbanization in China. Furthermore, since 'inclusive development and sustainable growth' underlie the economic and material conditions necessary for implementing alternative models of urbanization, sustainability is also kept as another dimension of the proposed urbanization pattern in this dissertation. Sustainability, as used in Friedmann's (1992) discussion, refers to a critical dimension of development models that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Therefore, drawing upon regional and international experience as well as Friedmann's (1992) framework, inclusive and sustainable urbanization, which represents social, economic and environmental domains of urbanization, is a primary term of analysis in this dissertation.

In addition, gender equity and women's empowerment represent a critical aspect of the social integration of women in development and urbanization. Promoting women's empowerment and gender parity are two important principles informing the third Millennium Development Goals (MDG3), as declared by United Nations in 2000. Because gender relations

reflect the most fundamental social relations within a society, women's empowerment has the potential to bring gender equity to both women and men in social development (Kabeer, 2001). The mutual reinforcement of gender equality and women's self-empowerment has the potential to enable women to adapt to the new situations and become proactive agents in their own lives, and in the lives of their families and communities, with positive impacts on economic development (Kabeer, 2001). In the context of China's current processes of urbanization – due partly to the combination of institutions, patriarchal cultures, and state policies – rural-urban migration is primarily characterized by men wandering between rural and urban areas while leaving female farmers behind in rural regions. Ultimately, it is critical to integrate farming families into current urbanization processes. More specifically, left-behind women also need to be included in any viable alternative urbanization framework. An inclusive and sustainable urbanization pathway cannot be considered complete if female family members are left behind in the rural areas, constrained by gender inequalities in the agricultural sector, or in family transitions between rural and urban livelihoods. Thus, female farmers, who are left behind due to gendered divisions of labor within and outside farmer households, are another main subject of analysis in this dissertation, providing a gendered perspective on urbanization processes.

In sum, moving toward inclusive and sustainable urbanization through promoting farming families' integration into urbanization processes in China in general, and improving gender equity in rural regions through promoting left-behind women's self-empowerment in agriculture, in particular, are two critical considerations for developing alternative policy approaches to urbanization in China.

1.4 The rationale and methodology for the dissertation

This study draws on theories and practices of empowerment to examine how alternative development frameworks may be useful as a guide for China to pursue its goals for sustainable development and economic growth. More specifically, Friedmann's (1992) alternative development approach, which is centered on empowering the disempowered, may help navigate policies moving from a state-dominated process towards more participatory urbanization.

Empowerment approaches toward alternative development, which focus on promoting self-governance among local communities, households, and individuals, works from the micro-level of individual lives to macro socioeconomic contexts. This bottom-up approach could provide China with a more people-oriented practice of integrating farmer households and female

family members into its on-going urbanization practices, thus balancing land-centered and people-oriented pathways to urbanization. As one of Friedmann's (1992) four levels of integration, social integration focuses on promoting gender equity within and beyond households. This focus not only makes it possible to investigate the impact of gender inequality on women's empowerment and disempowerment but also enhances the full inclusion of grassroots households comprised of both male and female farmers. Friedmann's (1992) alternative development framework advocates building a civil society that enlarges individual life choices and livelihoods rather than promoting economic growth in the costs of socioeconomic equity. Thus, the empowerment approaches advocated by Friedmann (1992) could be a starting point for an alternative urbanization framework in China.

By integrating analyses arising from the development experiences of Latin America and East Asia into China's socialist market regime, an alternative pathway for China's urbanization, comprising inclusive development and sustainable growth, as well as gender equity and women's empowerment, are considered in this dissertation. China is more likely to steer its current economy-oriented urbanization toward alternative approaches if these objectives gain importance in public discourses within China. While institutions and policies that expand farmers' agency during urbanization may be the first step toward alternative urbanization policies and practices in China, successful empowerment of left-behind women could also have a profound impact on lifting women's self-recognition of agency, which could, in turn, have a positive impact on improving gender equity. If left-behind women could be empowered by taking advantage of the managerial opportunities available to them in agriculture, then farmer households might be expected to do at least as well, should China move toward a more people-oriented model of urbanization. The alternative urbanization model proposed here may ultimately improve the overall well-being and gender parity of both male and female farmers through inclusive and sustained urbanization.

As such, this dissertation is designed to investigate the issues in sequence through two chapters. Each of them addresses one key field of the research questions in depth. The first of these examines how the state can utilize land resources to promote inclusive and sustainable development by featuring more farmer-oriented urbanization planning. The second focuses on how being left behind may provide a context in which women in agriculture may be empowered, and an examination of policy implications for improving gender equity.

1.4.1 Moving toward inclusive and sustainable urbanization in China

This study explores answers to the policy dilemmas arising in China as it aspires to balance land-driven urban growth toward more people-oriented urbanization patterns that reflect best practices in international development trends, while also addressing structural domestic challenges at micro and macro levels. Building on the World Bank's framework (Narayan, 2005), the project of engaging rural-urban communities in the development of more farmer-oriented approaches to integrating state and market policies could be undertaken in China.

Given the vast diversity of geographic and socio-economic conditions, and the strong uneven rural-urban development patterns within China, it is impractical to expect any single alternative framework to operate as a panacea in responding to structural issues. Rather, a detailed case study, analyzing a specific example of integrated alternative institutional frameworks for hukou and land tenure reform, may provide practical insights into China's on-going and future urbanization policy directions in relation to farmers. In this sense, Chongqing, which is one of the four central municipalities and the first national pilot zone of integrated rural-urban reform, is a good candidate for this purpose. Given its unique position, Chongqing is not only able to initiate a series of pilot reforms that have not been undertaken elsewhere in China; it also provides insights into the relationship between the institutional requirements of the Chinese economic system and local urbanization patterns.

Based on the results of the case study, the second chapter demonstrates that 'empowerment' principles have been integrated into the rationale informing Chongqing's policy design and implementation. Furthermore, the inclusive and sustainable urbanization pattern evident in Chongqing is compatible with China's current and historical socialist regime, which means key insights from Chongqing's case may be applicable in other jurisdictions. Chongqing's case shows that more careful balancing between land-driven and farmer-oriented urbanization provides an affordable and sustainable pathway toward equitable socioeconomic development.

1.4.2 China's left-behind women and their possible empowerment in agriculture

Targeting China's left-behind women, the third chapter applies an international empowerment index to measure and quantify their empowerment status, using a pilot sample drawn from three Northeastern provinces in China. Based on fieldwork conducted in rural Northeast China, and applying the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) to the data gathered, this study examines opportunities for women's empowerment, even under

conditions of being left-behind by current approaches to urbanization in China. For this study, women in participating villages are categorized as left-behind when their husbands are away for at least six months of the year, and non-left-behind, when their husbands are present for six months of the year or more. The idea is to compare the empowerment status between left-behind and non-left-behind women, rather than tracking changes in the familial status of left-behind women over time, since this study is the first attempt to apply the WEAI in the context of China and no time-series data is available.

In total, 151 of 200 households were selected from the regional surveys conducted,⁴ as fitting the two categories of left-behind and non-left-behind women. After matching the two groups on both external and internal factors, a comparison was made between 58 left-behind and 93 non-left-behind households. The results show that left-behind women are more empowered in agriculture than the non-left-behind women, holding all other factors constant. By further decomposing the sub-indexes of WEAI, domains and indicators that can inform policies to increase women's empowerment are also identified.

1.5 Organization of the dissertation

The study is organized into four chapters.

The first Chapter describes the historical background and theoretical considerations informing the current analysis, defines the problems and research questions, and provides an overview of important theoretical trends that support further investigation of alternative urbanization planning patterns in China, based on a selective literature review.

Chapter 2 explores the possibilities for a more farmer-oriented urbanization pattern by building on a combination of Friedmann's (1992) alternative approaches and the World Bank's development framework, both of which are centered on socioeconomic empowerment. Then, the elaborated framework is compared with China's dominant urbanization model, identifying gaps between the two approaches. The case study of Chongqing provides an important and locally grounded test of an alternative approach to urbanization from within China, demonstrating that capacity for promoting a farmer-friendly, people-oriented approach to urbanization is evident in local practices and is affordable if all participants' interests are matched properly.

⁴ The survey was conducted in the Northeastern region of China, including Jilin, Liaoning and Heilongjiang provinces, in February 2015. The Northeast area is China's key agricultural zone with a relatively large rural population engaging in the agricultural sector, which makes the region very suitable for the purposes of the study.

Chapter 3 begins to explore how left-behind women adapt to their husbands' absences, by focusing on their relative experiences of agency during the change, compared with women whose husbands remain in the village. By undertaking a pilot application of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), this chapter provides an empirically richer understanding of left-behind women's conditions for empowerment. Based on results showing that economic independence increases left-behind women's empowerment, this study sheds light on policy measures that may facilitate women's self-recognition of agency and internal empowerment in the urbanization processes.

Chapter 4 summarizes and concludes the study by drawing lessons from each of the two independent essays. Policy implications for China's capacity to undertake alternative urbanization approaches are then presented. Finally, future directions for studies that can advance beyond the limitations of the present study are also considered.

**toward Inclusive and Sustainable Urbanization in China: A Case Study of
Chongqing**

This chapter first presents historical factors that contribute to China's current land-driven urbanization and demonstrates how the current top-down approach inherently prevents the emergence of more inclusive and sustainable patterns of urbanization. Then, it explores the possibilities for a more farmer-oriented urbanization pattern, by building on the World Bank's development framework, which is centered on socioeconomic empowerment. To better understand how China's urbanization has evolved and continues to shift, a historical review of its urbanization trajectory is conducted. By comparing the proposed alternative framework, with China's dominant urbanization model, gaps between the two approaches are identified. A case study of Chongqing's hukou and land tenure reform is incorporated to further demonstrate that capacity for promoting an inclusive and sustainable approach to urbanization is evident in local practices and is affordable, if all participants' interests are better aligned.

2.1 Introduction

The twentieth century was characterized by rapid urbanization, accompanied by massive rural-to-urban migration in China and around the world. In 2008, for the first time in human history, the world population was evenly divided among rural and urban regions (Population Reference Bureau [PRB] staff, 2009). The urban population of China has also increased dramatically from 18% in 1978 to 51% of the total population in 2011 (Development Research Center of the State Council [DRC], 2011), when migrant residents without urban citizenship are factored in. The UN estimates that the world population will reach 9.31 billion, and that 67% of the total will live in cities by 2050 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs of United Nations [UNDESA], 2012). Most developing regions, including Latin America, Asia and Africa, have all experienced very rapid urbanization since the 1970s (Beall, Guha-Khasnobis & Kanbur, 2012). Furthermore, current development doctrine, as dominated by a growth-maximizing model, encourages many developing countries to promote urbanization with the vision of achieving high economic growth (Chenery & Syrquin, 1975; Lin, 2009). Thus, urbanization and rural-urban migration have become and will continue to be a worldwide phenomenon.

Urbanization may be one pathway toward, but may not necessarily always result in, sustainable high economic growth and equitable development. As shown in the cases of most Latin American and Asian countries, urbanization and economic growth alone may not lead to sustainable development, in terms of continuous growth and overall well-being of the general population. On the contrary, after years of rapid urbanization, most Latin American and some African countries have fallen back into low-income⁵ status, particularly during the international Debt Crisis in the 1980s. In Asia, only five countries (regions) remain designated as high-income nations (areas), including Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong (China) and Taiwan (China), while other previously designated fast-growing countries, such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Philippines, were trapped in the recession arising from the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997. There must have been other factors involved that enabled the five newly industrialized economies (NIEs) to overcome the so-called middle-income⁶ trap, which allowed them to transform themselves into high-income countries (Gill et al., 2007).

In examining the historical trajectory of the five NIEs and other fast-growing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, the Commission on Growth and Development (2008) found that sustained growth and inclusive development were mutually reinforcing factors and two key objectives for the five high-income nations to enlarge the scope for individuals and the society to be productive and prosper. Even though any nation's prosperity cannot be measured merely in economic terms, sustainable growth is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for the socioeconomic prosperity of individuals as well as societies (Commission on Growth and Development, 2008). As shown in the introductory chapter, South Korea and Chinese Taiwan have achieved relatively sustainable growth and inclusive development, thus providing important lessons for other countries attempting to catch up and reach high income rankings.

While international paradigms, discourses or practices may have a substantial impact on a nation's growth and development policies, the desired outcomes may be more likely to occur when the national authority approves and integrates the international paradigm or experience into local systems (Hayami & Godo, 2005). As shown in the experience of several developing

⁵ Low-income is one of the income categories defined by the World Bank, since 1987. Based on a country's GDP per capita, the country falls into one of four categories, including low-income, low-middle-income, high-middle-income and high-income. Based on the 2012 rankings, a GDP per capita under \$1000 USD is low-income, from \$1000-\$4000 is low-middle-income, from \$4000 to \$12500 is high-middle-income, and beyond \$12500 falls into the high-income category.

⁶ The middle-income trap is the situation in which a country's growth slows down after reaching middle-income levels.

countries in the 1970s and 1980s, following the hegemonic marketization discourse without taking their potential comparative advantages and disadvantages into account led to extensive and deep economic interruptions, rather than boosting economic growth, as expected (Lin, 2009; Szeleny, 2011). For any nation that hopes to follow the path of the five NIEs, inclusive development and sustained growth are recognized as necessary elements supporting high-speed growth with fewer such interruptions or shocks along the pathway toward high-income status (Commission on Growth and Development, 2008). Even when accounting for comparative advantages, such as cheap laborers and abundant natural resources, achieving high income status may still depend on a nation's capacity to integrate inclusion and sustainable growth into its primary development objectives and to pursue them strategically, based on local needs.

Even though China has accomplished remarkable growth and become the second largest economic entity in the world, it is facing great global and domestic challenges, including a shrinking global market, over-investment in urban assets, weak domestic consumption demand, and increasing social disparity, which have slowed down its high economic growth and resulted in increasing social unrest (Hua, 2014; Huang, 2011; Sun, 2008). These challenges impose great pressure on China's ambition of achieving continuous growth and catching up with the high-income countries. However, this situation may also provide China with the opportunity to rebalance its distorted development patterns toward more inclusive and sustainable approaches, by engaging localized versions of the development patterns of the five East Asian economies, at least to some degree, initiating necessary changes in accordance with its dominant political economy.

Given that China's current economic structure is very similar to the starting-off phase of South Korea and Chinese Taiwan (Hua, 2014), continuous urbanization, inclusive democracy, and further marketization appear to be viable solutions for addressing China's socioeconomic challenges, if it follows the path of the five NIEs. While further marketization for efficiency at the expense of equity will only deepen China's existing socioeconomic problems (Huang, 2011; Zhou, 2014), any possible transformation from a socialist toward a more democratic regime is still a matter of heated debate and may not be resolved any time soon (Nee & Oppen, 2012; Tsai, 2007). Unlike divergent opinions on marketization and democratic solutions, however, it is widely recognized that China's under-scaled urbanization, as measured by its large rural population and limited degree of industrialization relative to other countries (Au & Henderson,

2002; Li, 1999), are among the main causes leading to most of China's domestic challenges (Cai, 2011; Hua, 2014). Consequently, promoting urbanization aimed at accelerating agricultural modernization and enhancing domestic consumption power are included and claimed as key objectives in China's Five-Year Plans for Social and Economic Development, since 2011. However, China's current under-urbanization pattern leaves the majority of the population as farmers with limited buying power, while over-urbanizing farmland, owing to heavy state-led investment in urban infrastructure (Jin, Qian & Weingast, 2005; Huang, 2012). This distorted urbanization pattern is the combined outcome of China's historical institutions, as developed under the practices of a planning economy, and a by-product of corporatist-state development strategies (Huang, 2011; Wen, 2014).

The hukou⁷ and land tenure systems are considered to be the two major institutional barriers contributing to China's land-driven urbanization approach. This is mainly because the hukou system acts to ensure that new urban residents remain unregistered as urban citizens, thereby preventing them from gaining permanent hukou status in their destination areas (Chan & Buckingham, 2008). This semi-permanent outsider status for China's rural migrants makes them more susceptible to social discrimination and exploitation, thus constraining the benefits of China's human urbanization in general (Fan, 2008; Knight, Song & Jia, 1999; Rozelle, 1999). On the other hand, due to the state's monopoly on land requisition and the lack of private ownership of rural land, local states play predominant roles in land conversion from rural to urban purposes, extracting high land-lease revenue (Ong, 2014). Land-lease income motivates local states to engage in increasingly sprawling urban built areas, which leads to rapid growth of urban land use without simultaneously transforming farmers into urban citizens, accordingly.

Even though the hukou and land tenure systems may have profound negative impacts on China's socioeconomic transformation, current policy approaches still seek to reform the existing system rather than abolishing it (Chan & Buckingham, 2008; Tao & Xu, 2007). This is mainly due to the fact that, even though China's socialist market economy prioritizes economic growth as its primary goal, it is still subject to maintaining the Communist Party of China's (CPC) political control in the society (Qian & Wu, 2008). Since hukou and the land tenure system provide the government with opportunities to control rural-urban labor distribution and a

⁷ The Hukou system has been established in China since the 1950s, aiming to balance the population between rural and urban areas. Under the system, individuals are entitled to Hukou identity upon their origin of birth. Local employment, and access to education and social security are exclusively based on one's Hukou status.

monopoly in land conversion, to fully abandon the two systems will face great resistance from local states (Cai, 2011). As a result, China's marketization is incomplete and states still manage the economy to a high degree. Even though China's development trajectory in recent decades features capitalist characteristics (Huang, 2012), the political reforms only occur at the state level, without moving China's political regime toward democracy (Tsai, 2007). It thus seems extremely difficult for China to make use of, and to integrate, international experiences in development or urbanization into its economic system, if the proposed change is in conflict with the political interests of those in power.

While urbanization is considered the optimal pathway for China to transform itself from a middle to high-income country, most scholars and policy makers have continuously focused on promoting urbanization through increasing industrialization, marketization or structural adjustments, neglecting the role of farmers in China's urbanization and migration processes (Hua, 2014). Since China's current land-biased approaches to urbanization systematically exclude farmers from integrating into urban regions, the result is that China's current land-driven urbanization leaves the majority of the population in rural areas and excludes them from sharing proportionally in and making optimal contributions to the prosperity of development. Therefore, it is critical to find a better balance between land-driven and people-oriented urbanization, with a focus on farming households. Even though there is increasing attention on this pressing issue and a "people-oriented" approach of urbanization has been officially identified and supported by the central government (National Development and Reform Commission [NDRC], 2014), no clear guidance or framework on how to achieve the re-balancing of approaches to China's farmer-urbanization exist. To steer China's urbanization in a more people-oriented direction, an alternative methodology, focusing primarily on farming households, and enabling their integration into mainstream development and policy-making process, is required. This leads to the primary research question informing this chapter: given China's current land-biased urbanization, how can the nation move to utilize and re-construct land resources, creating new opportunity structures and access so that the farmers excluded from full participation in urbanization, may come to fully participate in and influence the decisions that affect them, in order to integrate more effectively into better, more inclusive and people-oriented sustainable urbanization processes?

To better understand the dynamics shaping China's current land-biased urbanization and to propose possible alternative pathways for achieving a more people-oriented approach, this study examines a particular instance of policy dilemmas that may arise when official policy constrains benefit-sharing among the majority population and thereby limits sustained growth.

The key idea informing China's capacity to move toward a people-oriented framework is centered on collective and individual empowerment of the disempowered, as advocated through historical and contemporary international development discourses. Drawing on Kabeer's (2001) and Narayan's (2005) definitions of empowerment, this study defines the term as an increase or expansion in farming families' assets and capacities to negotiate with, influence, and hold accountable government policies and institutions, through which they not only choose between rural and urban hukou registrations but also settle down accordingly in the area they ultimately choose. To describe and understand farmers' ability for conceptualizing, using and achieving strategic life choices during urbanization, their choices as to whether they can pursue their livelihood in either rural or urban areas, as constrained by their rural hukou identity, are documented.

In the late 1960s, the international development community began questioning the still dominant growth-maximization doctrine in efforts to consider alternative frameworks committed to human empowerment and sustainability, with constructive intergenerational impact on overall prosperity (Friedmann, 1992). Since then, empowerment has become increasingly popular as a mantra in shaping the international democratization movement that began to dominate development discourses in 1970s (Friedmann, 1992). The inclusive politics movement was promoted by Western developed countries as well as by international organizations, hoping to spread democracy and liberal economic models all over the world. However, "top-down" political movements that did not reflect local contexts did not necessarily bring economic growth or social development. The previous success and current struggles of most Latin American countries are considered to be the result of these movements, which confuse social democratization with neoliberal marketization (Hua, 2014). In recent years, there has been growing attention to sustainability and empowerment frameworks, which echo the empowerment initiatives made popular in the 1960s (Islam, 2015). Since the 1990s, empowerment, as a grounded approach, has regained its international reputation and has been recognized as an effective measure for sustainable and inclusive development (Brun, Blaikie & Jones, 2014).

Increasingly, international organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), have integrated empowerment into their agendas and redefined their missions with a greater focus on human development (Alkire et al., 2013).

International empowerment methodologies may provide China with a possible “bottom-up” framework for engaging both the state and farmers to initiate more inclusive urbanization policies and practices. China’s transition, from a centralized planning to a decentralized market economy, has also been characterized as “empowering” local states and individual farmers through continuous policy decentralization and the theoretical expansion of farmers’ life choices (Liu, Carter & Yao, 1998; Huang, 2011). In reviewing China’s socioeconomic transformation, there were certainly times when the nation state was willing to, and successful in, extending power to the people, such as acknowledging the “bottom-up” institutional interventions of Household Contract Responsibility System (HCRS) in 1982, and allowing villagers to transfer to urban hukou since 1984. The HCRS, which provided incentives for farmers to invest in agriculture and resulted in significant increases in agricultural production, was initially invented by groups of farmers and admitted by the central state as national policy. Thus, its enactment as a policy means the government was willing to decentralize its policy to the local level. While hukou transfer was more strictly controlled previously, the policy implemented in 1984 enabled farmers to make their own decisions on whether or not to change their hukou status from rural to urban, under designated conditions. However, there have also been times when the central authority has failed to promote decentralized or people-empowered policies, such as when it has enforced policy initiatives directing rural migrants to settle down in small and medium sized cities, while strictly limiting migration to mega cities, beginning in 2010. Research indicates that medium-sized or big cities are the most popular destinations for migrant workers, while less than 10% of all migrant workers had settled in small towns by 2015 (Cai, 2011).

Three implications can be derived from the above examples, which were guided by a mix of state-led and bottom-up approaches: first, the central state, representing the interests of the Communist Party of China, plays a dominant role in generating and approving any decentralization or institutional changes; second, policy decentralization can be effective in managing local affairs, but it needs to be further devolved toward local people in design and implementation to be successful; third, decentralization policies, reflecting local context and

engaging the grassroots, are more likely to lead to desired policy outcomes, based on the documented success of the HCRS in improving agricultural productivity. In this sense, more farmer-oriented urbanization, from the perspective of empowering the disempowered, implies utilization of available opportunities and further devolution of decision-making to farmers, while complying with China's predominant socioeconomic structure.

Advocacy for the development of a state-supported empowerment machinery, achieved by providing a suite of policy instruments for individuals to use in negotiating their communal rights, emerges from the inevitable tensions between individualist claims to rights-based citizenship and communitarian approaches that stress identity-based communities (Elliott, 2008). Empowerment-centered approaches to development can be found within both international and China's domestic experiences, because empowerment strategies share some common ground across capitalist and socialist ideologies. There is an aspiration in both political systems to improve overall prosperity of the nation, by making the most of the talents of the people. In this sense, empowerment methodologies in policy development are compatible with and have important foundations and precedents in China's socialist context.

After a selective review of empowerment frameworks for development, the World Bank's empowerment framework of development, centered on empowering poor people through mainstreaming them in the development process, can be applied well to describe and guide China's urbanization processes. Under this framework, farmers and migrant workers may be empowered in their interactions with the state, as well as with the institutions that affect their lives (Narayan, 2005). Thus, building on the World Bank's framework, China could pursue a more farmer-oriented urbanization policy, engaging rural-urban communities with the state and market. Unlike the World Bank's framework, which stresses the general development outcomes toward empowerment, the present study focuses exclusively on policies and strategies that support farmers' agency to make strategic choices on whether to pursue their livelihood in rural or urban areas. Supporting farmers' empowerment in this way may, in turn, improve the accountability of the state and affect its policy and practices, further facilitating farmers' empowerment and their potential contributions to state prosperity. Applying an alternative empowerment framework for development in China may also serve to identify and ameliorate the gap between China's current "land-based" urbanization and more people-oriented urbanization of farmers and migrant workers.

Considering the great regional as well as rural-urban disparities within China, it is impractical to expect any single alternative framework to fully represent all of the structural issues in play. Rather, a case study, elaborating salient features of the World Bank's framework and related analysis in a specific case model, may provide practical insights into China's on-going and future urbanization policy directions, especially in relation to farmers. Chongqing, one of the four central municipalities and the first national pilot zone of integrated rural-urban reform, is a good candidate for this purpose. Chongqing has been given a great deal of support and discretion in seeking innovative and feasible ways of reforming institutional barriers to farmers' integration in urbanization, such as hukou and land tenure systems, which produce increasing rural-urban segregation (Huang, 2012). Given its direct connection with the national government, Chongqing is able to initiate a series of pilot reforms that have not been undertaken elsewhere in China. Meanwhile, this case study can also provide insights into the relationship between local policy dynamics and urbanization patterns thereby induced. Thus, Chongqing's recent comprehensive hukou reform, linking farmers and rural land benefits through rural land exchange markets, is selected for this case study.

Based on results from the case study, it can be seen that even though 'empowerment' is not generally a fully assimilated part of the state's policy agenda, it has been integrated into the rationale informing Chongqing's policy design and implementation. Farmers, as well as migrant workers, are not only empowered to make strategic choices between rural and urban destinations, but are also entitled to equal benefits and rights with local citizens, which helps them to integrate more fully into the local context of their choice. Furthermore, given Chongqing's pioneering position in initiating its pilot hukou reform, the alternative urbanization framework evident in Chongqing is compatible with China's current and historical socialist regime, which means key insights from Chongqing's case may be applicable to other jurisdictions with adaptations that reflect local contexts. Empirical evidence from Chongqing also proves that more careful balancing between land-driven and people-oriented urbanization provides an affordable and sustainable pathway toward integrated rural-urban development. However, more farmer-friendly urbanization, predicated upon empowering farmers in the urbanization process, would be a first step towards China's ultimate goal of achieving sustained economic growth and inclusive development. There may also be environmental benefits, which would support long-term economic sustainability and responsible natural resource management.

In addition to the introductory section, this chapter contains six other sections. Section 2 provides a review of relevant literature to serve as a background for the case study. Section 3 presents methodology and rationales for a retrospective look at China's urbanization trajectory and a case study of Chongqing. Section 4 provides a historical review of China's urbanization and associated institutional reforms, through which the gap between China's current land-driven and proposed human-centered urbanization models are identified. Section 5 examines dynamics between the state and peasant farmers by identifying the salient features of the World Bank's empowerment framework of development operating in and modified with a greater understanding arising from the case study of Chongqing. Section 6 provides concluding remarks and policy implications.

2.2 Building a framework for inclusive and sustainable urbanization in China

As China's urbanization continues, historical institutional settings that developed under the centralized planning regime still dominate and persist in most socioeconomic fields. Thus, institutionalized hukou and land tenure systems have been a continuous part of China's urbanization process. This section first reviews relevant studies on China's reform of hukou and land tenure systems, respectively, as well as the literature on integrated reform of the two systems. Then, it examines the international empowerment research on development, to consider its relevance for informing China's urbanization policies and practices in the direction of more people-oriented development. The origin, meaning, and major empowerment frameworks of development are reviewed accordingly. Lastly, by integrating the World Bank's empowerment framework into China's urbanization contexts, a farmer-oriented framework centered on farmers' choices between rural and urban hukou is advocated.

2.2.1 State-led urbanization, institutional reforms and the missing voice of farmers

The early stages of industrialization and urbanization, viewed from historical and international perspectives, have been paralleled by a geographic redistribution of the population, mainly through internal migration from rural to urban areas (Chenery & Syrquin, 1975; Ofer, 1977; Polanyi, 1957). According to Lewis (1954), national urbanization was driven by capital accumulation in urban industries. Economic development is thus accomplished by transferring labor from traditional to modern capitalistic sectors. There are two underlying assumptions informing Lewis' (1954) dual-economy model: An abundant rural labor force exists and rural-

urban migration is frictionless; the urban labor market is perfectly competitive and there is no significant discrimination against migrants. In this model, urbanization occurs smoothly and there is no unemployment in urban labor market, which is the perfect situation of the real world.

For most socialist countries, even though extensive unemployment and social discrimination exist in urban sectors, industrialization and urbanization happen almost simultaneously and are also mutually reinforcing (Ofer, 1977). However, this is not the case for China, where urbanization is occurring far ahead of its industrialization (Hua, 2014; Zhou, 1994). This is due to the fact that local governments increasingly rely on land revenues to promote local economic growth as an outcome of China's fiscal recentralization, since 1994 (Kung, Xu & Zhou, 2013). Consequently, local governments, which are driven by the land-leasing revenues, continuously expand urban boundaries beyond rural-urban fringe (Ong, 2014). Thus, China's urbanization is mainly driven by the state with a view to market prominence, rather than being centered on socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability. This distorted urbanization pattern, which excludes most farmers from being urbanized, has gradually posed extensive negative impacts on almost every field in China's socioeconomic context (Wang, 2005; Tao & Xu, 2007). To address the issue, continuous attempts at institutional and policy reforms are evident in China's urbanization processes. Among others, hukou and land tenure systems are considered as the two most challenging policy fields requiring intervention (Wen, 2014). Even though some progress has been achieved, urbanization in China is still considered to be focused on urban land expansion rather than urbanizing the rural population, due to the persistent impact of the hukou and land tenure systems, which feature prominently within local states' development strategies (Zhang, 2004).

2.2.1.1 Hukou reforms accompanying economic development

The hukou system has been widely considered to play an important historical role in the implementation of China's planning economy, fostering rural-urban segregation, and constraining rapid urbanization (Wan, 2001). Most of the existing literature focuses on unfinished aspects of hukou system reform by investigating the consequential impacts of hukou on socioeconomic class and regional development patterns (Cai, 2011). On a macro-economic level, hukou has increased the long-term disparities between rural and urban regions (Wu & Treiman, 2004). Furthermore, Cai (2001) and Au and Henderson (2002) argued that hukou limited China's overall economic performance by preventing free rural-urban migration and integration. As rapid

rural-urban migration floods cities, migrant workers have faced specific structural forms of social exclusion and marginalization, due to their lack of local hukou (Alexander & Chan, 2004). More specifically, rural migrants have less opportunity of getting decent jobs than their urban counterparts (Knight et al., 1999; Wong, Fu, Chang & Song, 2007); they are also excluded from public rental housing and urban education (Wong, 2007; Wu, 2002; Zhao, 2005).

Hukou is not only a policy but also an institution, because it is deeply rooted in China's governance structures and policy settings and has influenced every individual and communal aspect of Chinese society (Fan, 2008). According to North (1990), the institutions present at any point in time can only be understood by tracing their incremental evolution over a lengthy period, as produced effects of historical processes. This approach enables scholars to study hukou reform from the perspective of incremental institutional change. Cheng & Selden (1994) offer an in-depth discussion of the origins and social consequences of the hukou system.

In a retrospective analysis of the historical path of hukou reform, China is neither moving to abolish the hukou system, nor does hukou's importance in limiting migration to major cities appear to be diminishing in the near future (Chan & Buckingham, 2008). Nevertheless, the state continues to play a key role in advancing China's hukou reform. With the experimental elimination of the agricultural and non-agricultural distinctions in certain provinces and cities in China, hukou classification is no longer as important as it once was (Chan & Buckingham, 2008). However, hukou location continues to determine access to services and to define one's life chances (Fan, 2008; Solinger, 1999; Wang & Cai, 2010). The differences among cities in terms of the types and amount of services and welfare available to local hukou holders has widened, along with variation in administrative rankings and levels of economic development (Cai, 2011). Normally, big cities with more welfare values are also the popular destinations for rural migrants. As a result, places where there is more social welfare value associated with local hukou have found it more difficult to relax the hukou system (Fan, 2008).

Another reason why local governments are not actively involved in hukou reform is because existing fiscal incentives have distorted their patterns of public expenditure, where promoting economic growth is given more priority than expenditures on basic public services (Fu & Zhang, 2007). As Cai (2011) points out, there is a tension between promotion of economic development and the need to provide social services within local governments. Since relaxing hukou for migrants is conceptualized as an increase in local states' public expenditure, local

governments have very few incentives to make any improvement to current migrant hukou status (Jin, Qian & Weingast, 2005). More specifically, taking land tenure systems into account, it becomes clear that the revenue from land conversion encourages the local state to engage increasingly in urbanizing the city's land base rather than urbanizing agricultural hukou holders (Miller, 2012; Ong, 2014). This may also explain why even though the estimated costs for civilianizing one migrant worker are affordable and have been well documented (Investigating group of Ministry of Construction, 2006; Zhang, 2009), the progress of transferring rural migrants to new urban citizens is still very limited (Hua, 2014).

Cai (2011) offered a comprehensive examination of available documents and explained hukou reforms by exploring the motives, behavior and interactions of all key players, including rural migrants, urban citizens and central and local governments, in a political economy framework. Hukou reforms have to provide a comprehensive package to tackle all risks facing migrant workers, from inclusive social protection policies in urban areas to flexible relocation policies in relation to arable land (Cai, 2011), in order to be attractive for farmers. Meanwhile, providing sufficient land revenue to those who are forced to move when rural land is appropriated for urban use would also have a positive impact on the willingness of migrants and farmers to settle in urban areas (Huang, 2011; Mullan, Grosjean & Kontoleon, 2010).

Given that the local state plays a key role in hukou reform and its behavior is driven by land revenue, land development may be one possible incentive for the local state to advance municipal hukou reform (Cai, 2011; Huang, 2012). Hence, hukou reform should be carried out with a much wider scope incorporating parallel changes to the land tenure system.

2.2.1.2 Land tenure reforms toward realizing full land rights

China has a distinct land tenure system, where rural land is nominally owned by the village collective, so individual households access only certain parts of their land rights, due to the principles informing the socialist political economy. Hence, individual farmers' ownership of agricultural land is understood as a form of "quasi-private" property rights (Kung, 1995). Since China's reform and opening up in 1978, China's land tenure reforms are moving gradually towards strengthening overall "quasi" property rights.

In 1978, China adopted its reform and opening policy, which created an open and innovative policy environment nationwide. This change in policy context enables China's central government to shift its focus toward promoting material production incentives for farming

households. To do so, the central state has raised the purchasing prices of major agricultural commodities and lowered the threshold of compulsory production quotas required for rural families (Liu, Carter & Yao, 1998). Meanwhile, improvements in the policy environment also provide the ground for bottom-up innovations from farmers. The well-known HCRS is among a number of decentralized production organizations providing farmers with work incentives by linking labor efforts and income (Mullan, Grosjean & Kontoleon, 2010). It is through the HCRS that the first two aspects of land rights have been fully extended to farmers. Admittedly, HCRS profoundly improved total agricultural productivity during China's initial transition from a planning economy to a market economy. However, due to its egalitarian nature, HCRS is currently considered one of the major institutional constraints preventing further land reforms towards agricultural modernization. Thus, most of the attention on HCRS has been focused on how to transform or eliminate it in order to realize larger scale agricultural production (Tao & Xu, 2007), whereas the significance of HCRS as the first decentralized land policy acknowledged and implemented by the national government has often been overlooked.

Liu, Carter and Yao (1998) are among the few scholars, who specifically examine the dynamics informing the origin and development processes of the HCRS. Before its formal adoption, four similar policy initiatives emerged and were turned down by the central government (Du, 1985). While the newly adopted Reform and Opening policy as well as a change in socialist ideology at the time contributed to the establishment of HCRS, its ultimate implementation might also be attributed to the fact that it fulfilled the common interests of the state, farmers, and other interest groups (Liu, Carter & Yao, 1998). Liu, Carter and Yao (1998) argued that the key reason why the decentralized HCRS policy could happen under an authoritarian regime was that the exclusive focus of HCRS was on enhancing agricultural production without challenging the absolute control of the state and collective authorities in many other areas. Through the HCRS, a "quasi" market for agricultural products has emerged in rural China, where the national state still sets a factor price for agricultural quotas and enacts its sovereignty through land reallocations. This revised model of marketization was really important in supporting China's move forward at the early stages of its reform and opening, since the market, which is generally conceptualized as a form of capitalism, threatened China's socialist regime. The "quasi" marketization coupled with the successful application of HCRS swept away dissenting voices, doubts and resistance in the society, thus leading China to further reforms in its

land tenure system as well as to further marketization, as seen today. Today, China has become the second biggest economy in the world and its socialist economic system has also evolved, while preserving the predominant position of the CPC in framing its socioeconomic regimes (Qian & Wu, 2008). Thus, even though the experience of the HCRS may not be fully suited to the current context, its integrated policy dynamics may shed light on what might be most effective in proposing further structural reforms in China.

Centered on land transfer rights and rights to secure possession, studies on Chinese land tenure reforms have focused almost exclusively on the impact of the rural land tenure system on investment and productivity (Carter, Roth, Liu & Yao, 1999; Jacoby, Li, & Rozelle, 2002). Available empirical studies examine the impact of the land tenure security on investments, by strengthening claims to the distribution of assets and increasing access to capital, as relevant laws make it impossible to use land as collateral for obtaining loans (Ma, Heerink, van Ierland, van den Berg & Shi, 2013). The focus of these studies is mainly on land tenure insecurity caused by land use readjustments within villages. The types of investments examined in these studies tend to be relatively short-term and land-related, such as the purchase of fertilizers, or green and organic manure (Feng, Heerink, Ruben & Qu, 2010). The results indicate that a higher expropriation risk as a result of land readjustments has a significant but small negative effect on short-term investment in land (de Brauw & Rozelle, 2008).

On the other hand, the lack of long-term planning on utilizing rural land, coupled with other factors, may lead to severe environmental issues, such as land degradation and deforestation (Liu, Wang, Gao & Deng, 2005). Weak law enforcement and limited land resources available for agriculture in rural China have led to increasing deforestation of farmland, soil and grassland (Xu, Yin, Li & Liu, 2006; Zhang et al., 2000), which in turn lead to soil erosion, flooding, landslides, droughts, and sandstorms (Liu et al., 2005). Attempts have been made to address the poor regulation of rural land use; however, without economic development to increase social welfare and economic productivity in rural areas, incentives for over-exploiting rural environments will remain unchanged (Mullan, Grosjean, & Kontoleon, 2011).

As China continues moving toward a market economy, growing numbers of studies have stressed the impact of land tenure security on rural-urban migration (Rozelle, Brandt, Li & Huang, 2002; Zhu, 2007). The current land system affects rural labor mobility decisions and associated rural-urban migration in many ways. First, besides the costs and risks of moving to urban areas,

migration in China is also associated with a probability for redistribution of some of the household land, which entails a net loss of land access (Rozelle & Li, 1998). This is due to the fact that HCRS entitles all villagers, both current and future, with equal access to farmland on a fairly egalitarian basis (Rozelle et al., 2002). Thus, the collectively owned farmland is reallocated as needed to reflect demographic changes within villages. Some scholars believe that land reallocation represents a way of ensuring that villagers comply with the implementation of state policies (Turner, Brandt & Rozelle, 2004). For example, villagers' cooperation with state policies can be one criteria for future land reallocation. Second, migration is also encouraged by the development of land transfer rights. As Rozelle (1999) suggested, the ability both to rent out land and use it as collateral for credits might have positive impacts on migration. Third, rural labor mobility in China is more likely to occur on a more temporary basis than other countries due to the potential loss of land rights after permanent settlement in urban areas (Mullan, Grosjean, & Kontoleon, 2011). Furthermore, due partly to the hukou system, most migrant workers facing limited jobs, welfare coverage and extensive discrimination in urban areas, are reluctant to give up their rural land and their primary social supports in rural areas (Zhu, 2007).

Another key issue in the rural land system is massive land requisitions led by states in the process of urbanization. Since the mid-1990s, China has witnessed rapid urbanization fuelled by dramatic expansion in large-scale infrastructure development. The high demand for rural land, in turn, has caused increasing land requisition in suburban areas (Ho & Lin, 2004). Between 1984 and 2008, China's urban areas dramatically expanded from 8,842 to 36,295 km², or by 410 percent (NBS, 2009). Although most land requisitions affect only a fraction of farmers that live on the rural-urban fringe, it is becoming the most controversial area of land tenure reforms. One reason is that the uneven distribution of land value, when transforming rural land for non-agricultural usage, has resulted in increasing tensions among farmer groups and different economic interest groups (Hua, 2014). Another explanation is that while state-led compulsory land acquisition brings tremendous revenue to the local state (Chan, 2003), the compensation for dispossessed farmers is generally quite low (Guo, 2001). Ong (2014) indicated that, between 2004 and 2007, land transfer fees accounted for nearly 25 percent of total urban financing sources; however, after 2007, that percentage rose significantly, reaching 50 percent of local states' total financing in 2010. According to Tao and Xu (2007), if the average compensation for commercial land usage was between 300,000 to 450,000 Yuan, a displaced farmer was

compensated for approximately only 20,000 to 30,000 Yuan. In Zhejiang, while farmers normally get only 5-10 percent of the land revenue, local states may retain 20-30 percent, while commercial developers take away 40-50 percent of the benefits from land conversion (Tu, 2004). It is also estimated that from 2000 to 2010, the total built-up acreage in urban areas of China increased by 50% while the total urban population, including urban residents without local hukou, increased by only 26% (NBS, 2010). Thus, through local states' monopolies in land requisition, China has witnessed rapid land-driven urbanization rather than people-centered urbanization (Hua, 2014; Ong, 2014). Furthermore, China's land-biased urbanization is driven not only by local governments' land transfer revenue; it is also fueled by their significant bank borrowing. Local states' debts range from 5 to 14.4 trillion Yuan, accounting for between 13 and 36 percent of GDP in 2010 (Shih, 2010; Wong, 2012).

While there is a strong consensus on the need for further reform in China's land tenure system, especially the urban land requisition process, opinions diverge on how best to proceed across different disciplines. International scholarly attention has focused on the highly ambiguous definition of property rights in China and its impacts on the use and development of land (World Bank, 1993; Zhu, 2002; Hsing, 2010). The unclear definition of property rights offers no incentive for efficient land use and leads to competition for and over-exploitation of land. However, ambiguous land property rights may represent a necessary and desirable compromise in the Chinese case, allowing the state to have flexibility to respond to the many political, economic, and social problems that may arise on the risky and uncertain path of market transition (Zhu, 2002). To address the unfair distribution of land value during urban expansion, Tao and Xu (2007) proposed an added-value tax on land requisition, through which the land-added revenue could be redistributed across the broader public sphere. However, this tax levy cannot be realized without national initiatives for further reforms of the existing tax system. Practices to artificially promote larger scale agricultural production and the efficiency of land development have been undertaken through high-density peasant resettlements, first adopted in Jiangsu province in 2001 (Ong, 2014). Through the resulting "concentrated villages," farmland has been released by relocating farmers. However, due to local states' strong motivation to extract more land for urban development, the "additional" agricultural land is mainly exchanged for the quota of land to be used for commercial and industrial purposes in peri-urban areas (Ong, 2014). In this sense, the

“concentrated villages” model is a strengthened form of land requisition between the state and farmers without changing the states’ predominant role in the process.

In 2008, with national approval, Chengdu and Chongqing successively set up the first two revised land voucher programs in China. The basic idea of each program is somewhat similar to the “concentrated villages” model, which is designed to exchange rural-urban land quota to support urban construction. However, the land voucher program does so through a “quasi” land market, which actually capitalizes farmers’ abandoned homesteads as well as collective construction land (Zhou, 2014). The land voucher program improves the efficiency of land development and also enables farmers to share the benefits from urbanization, by increasing their capacity to negotiate with local states, as will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

While the hukou system has been eased continuously, China’s urbanization will not advance if other institutional barriers remain intact. The rural land tenure system, which is the fundamental economic institutional setting in rural China, is considered a primary constraint on rural-urban migration as well as urbanization (Mullan, Grosjean, & Kontoleon, 2011). In the same sense, in coping constructively with China’s urbanization, land reform should go beyond the land system itself to coordinate with hukou reforms.

2.2.1.3 Emerging studies on coordinated reforms of hukou and land tenure systems

Numerous studies focusing on coordinated reforms of hukou and land tenure systems have emerged to address most promising practices for realizing integrated rural-urban development, by overcoming institutional obstacles that segregate rural and urban regions. Chen and Lu (2009) argued that coordinated hukou and land reforms could provide new directions for China’s future development by linking mobile rural laborers with the transfer of land quota to urban regions. Other scholars have re-examined hukou reforms, claiming that their core task is to extend and realize equalized basic public services for urban residents, including migrant workers and new citizens. Clearly, a coordinated reform of hukou, land, and public finance institutions is needed (Tao & Wang, 2010). Yi (2013) proposed that urban employment systems should also be integrated into the coordinated hukou-land reform framework as a way to further strengthen the “pull-push” forces between rural and urban regions. Tao and Xu (2007) proposed an added-value tax on land requisition, through which the land-added revenue could be redistributed across the broader public sphere.

This strand of literature sheds new light into China's current and future urbanization regimes by providing a systematic perspective on China's institutional reforms. However, the literature does not provide clear guidance on how best to mainstream farmers into the urbanization process. A grounded approach that focuses on improving farmers' livelihoods and economic well-being in order to cope with China's mainstream development doctrine is missing in the literature.

2.2.2 Empowerment as a bottom-up development approach

Since the 1970s, empowerment as a grounded instrument for individuals to claim their freedom and to make strategic life choices has emerged and become increasingly popular in international economic and political discourses (Rowlands, 1998). However, divergent understandings and interpretations of 'empowerment' exist, due to its context-specific and, therefore, multi-dimensional nature. In this sense, it is critical to first examine the evolution of the term, so that it may be better understood before application in the case of China's processes for reform.

2.2.2.1 Freedom as the original idea behind empowerment

The modern notion of freedom of the individual has become linked with fundamental ideas about the self and individualism (Bauman, 1988). To the extent that self-interest and individualism could endanger societal cohesion, societies have had to develop ways of keeping such anti-social forces in check. To do so, modern democratic societies established scattered authorities rather than one single unified authority (Traynor, 2003). This required a diverse range of authorities to exist within the society, which intensified public debates about the optimal balance between individualism and communitarianism. On one hand, even though individualists admitted the necessary existence of states, they preferred limited government and the fulfillment of individual rights. More specifically, they conceived of citizenship as supporting equality among members in a political community that guarantees political and civil rights against intrusion by the state (Taylor, 1986). On the other hand, the communitarians recognize social solidarity as the first priority. They endorse the high value of leadership in formulating common goals and shaping choices, even if this results in hierarchy and exclusion. In this sense, conservatives elevated the rights of some people, who could contribute to and sustain the community, over the rights of other people, to exercise choice. Thus, 'empowerment' as an

instrument for individuals to negotiate their communal rights, emerged from the inevitable tensions between individual freedoms and the utilitarian basis of state power.

2.2.2.2 Meaning of empowerment

Due to the multidimensional nature, empowerment may be defined problematically and how the word is used in organizations or among individuals may vary considerably. In practice, activist groups use the term to mobilize people to engage in social movements advocating human rights, while scholars constantly try to explore the underlying meaning of, and ways of conceptualizing the term in various practical contexts (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). The majority of studies have defined empowerment as an expansion of agency. Agency refers to “what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important” (Sen, 1985, p. 206). The expansion of both types of freedoms – processes and capabilities – defines economic development (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). From the perspective of individuals’ capabilities, Malhotra, Schuler and Boender (2002) stated that empowerment referred to their agency to increase and expand assets and capabilities of both diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence, and transform the institutions that affected them. Empowerment can also be seen as a dynamic process of the “expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them” (Kabeer, 2001; p. 437). Some scholars define empowerment by emphasizing the preconditions required to expand agency.

Empowerment defined in this way has practical force in the development of poverty reduction policies. For example, empowerment can be understood as “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” (Narayan, 2005; p. 5). For poor people to exert that much agency, significant institutional and informal obstacles, as well as the rules that were made by elite groups, have to be transformed (Alsop, Bertelsen & Holland, 2006). Friedmann (1992) defined poverty as a form of disempowerment. This conceptualization of “poverty” extends the application of empowerment theory to a broader communal scope.

2.2.3 Frameworks of development centered on empowering the disempowered

Marginalized and disadvantaged people are also disempowered due to reasons rooted in the ideologies of a given society. More specifically, it is the interaction between the histories of institutional settings and the affected people’s age, gender, social class and many other factors

that give rise to their existing socioeconomic status. Women and the poor are normally the main target populations in most empowerment studies. Since the two groups have substantive overlapping members and characteristics, they represent generally disempowered people that need empowerment in order to maximize social and economic development. Women are very often the poorest of the poor due to the fundamental gender inequality in most societies. Empowering poor people in economic, social and political spheres not only elevates them from poverty but could also bring greater social solidarity to the society, which is the basis for most empowerment frameworks of development.

2.2.3.1 Friedmann's alternative development framework

Most neoclassic economists depict urbanization as continuous and advocate the complete absorbability of any rural surplus labor force through capital accumulation in urban economies (Lewis, 1954; Harris & Todaro, 1970). Focusing on the social outcomes of urbanization, industrialization, and modernization in most Latin American countries, Friedmann (1992) claimed that most rural laborers were considered redundant under paradigms of capital accumulation; thus they were born marginalized under capitalist regimes. The exclusion of abundant rural laborers from both economic justice and state politics may improve short-term economic growth. However, sustainable development, both in terms of market growth and environmental resource management can never be realized by leaving the majority of the population trapped and therefore disempowered by poverty.

To address and correct the inherent faults of capitalist economic growth models, Friedmann (1992) proposed a whole-economy model that incorporated the mainstream pattern of economic growth and non-market relations in the production of life and livelihood, through the agency of the household, which is also the basic unit of a civil society. Integrating civil society into the whole-economy model provides new perspectives on development, through which an alternative development framework centered on empowerment of the disempowered is built (Friedmann, 1992). As previously indicated, his alternative empowerment framework requires four conditions, including inclusive democracy, appropriate economic growth, gender equality and sustainability, as the priorities for any nation that is willing to achieve qualitative, inclusive and sustainable growth. These four claims or conditions further represent accordingly, political, economic, social and intergenerational integration within any society. According to Friedmann

(1992), both economic and environmental sustainability could be achieved through social, economic and political integration of the poor into the whole economy as a collective entity.

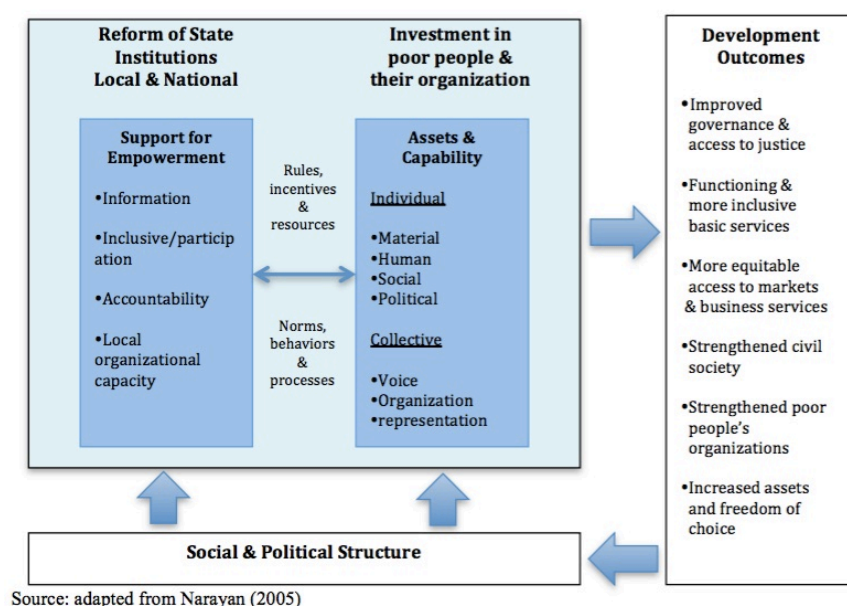
Friedmann's (1992) framework has practical implications for Latin American countries as well as most developing countries aspiring to socioeconomic transformation in the process of urbanization. Urbanization, based on the mainstream economic growth model, has tended to cause increasing numbers of displaced as well as marginalized peasant farmers, owing to farmers' disadvantaged positions during capital accumulation (Friedmann, 1992). Thus, it requires a strong government to correct this inherent inclination for exploiting and neglecting farmers' and therefore environmental well-being while promoting inclusive and sustained development. As Friedmann (1992) stated, "an alternative development is essentially a dialectical ideology and practice.... Its aim is to replace neither the one nor the other but to transform them both dramatically to make it possible for disempowered sectors to be included in political and economic processes and have their rights as citizens and human beings acknowledged" (p. VIII). This statement implies that the kind of alternative framework Friedmann proposes does not need to be totalized; rather, it can function in parallel to the mainstream model while transforming both of them toward realizing full integration of all citizens.

2.2.3.2 World Bank's empowerment framework of development

The World Bank's framework of empowerment draws heavily from multiple scholars' conceptualizations and understandings of empowerment and development (Samman & Santos, 2009). For example, Narayan's work (2005) defines empowerment "as increasing poor people's freedom of choice and action to shape their own lives" (p. 4). As Narayan (2002) stresses, empowerment can be realized through interactions between the agency of individuals and groups, and the opportunity structures in which individual and collective agency are potentially exercised. 'Agency' refers to an individual or group's ability to make purposeful choices (Narayan, 2002). There are two components of agency: individual assets and capabilities, and collective assets and capabilities. The asset in Narayan's framework is the indicator of agency, which is different from Kabeer's (1999) pre-condition of agency as a process. At the individual level, a lack of material assets means they have limited negotiation power, leading to their disadvantaged position within the society. Capability involves multiple types, including human social, psychological and political abilities. At the collective level, people's assets and capabilities include their voices, organizations, and identities (Narayan, 2005).

An opportunity structure can be described as “the broader institutional, social, and political context of formal and informal rules and norms within which actors pursue their interests” (Alsop, Bertelsen & Hollan, 2006, p. 14). In turn, the institutional climate includes access to information, inclusive participation, accountability and local organizational capacity. The social and political structures referred to above point to the degree of openness that poor people have available to them to make use of opportunities and services. According to Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland (2006), “An opportunity structure that allows people to translate their asset base into effective agency, through more equitable rules and expanded entitlements, constitutes a prerequisite for empowerment” (p. 16). An opportunity structure, then, enables the exercise of agency through an expanded range of meaningful choices that have the potential to empower individuals and groups. The World Bank’s model of empowering poor people is shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 World Bank's empowerment framework for development



Generally, the World Bank’s empowerment framework may be described as having three stages for promoting and evaluating opportunity structures: a) existence of choice (identifying whether any functional opportunity to make a choice exists), b) use of choice (whether a person or group actually uses the opportunity to choose), and c) achievement of choice (whether or not the choice brings about the desired result). It is noteworthy that even where individuals have the

chance to make a choice, their choice may not produce favorable results, since these choices may be constrained by formal and informal social structures (Narayan, 2002). The World Bank's empowerment framework offers tools to evaluate whether poor people may be empowered by governmental policy, through practices that integrate both the state and poor people into policy and development processes.

2.2.4 Possible inclusive and sustainable urbanization centered on farmer's empowerment

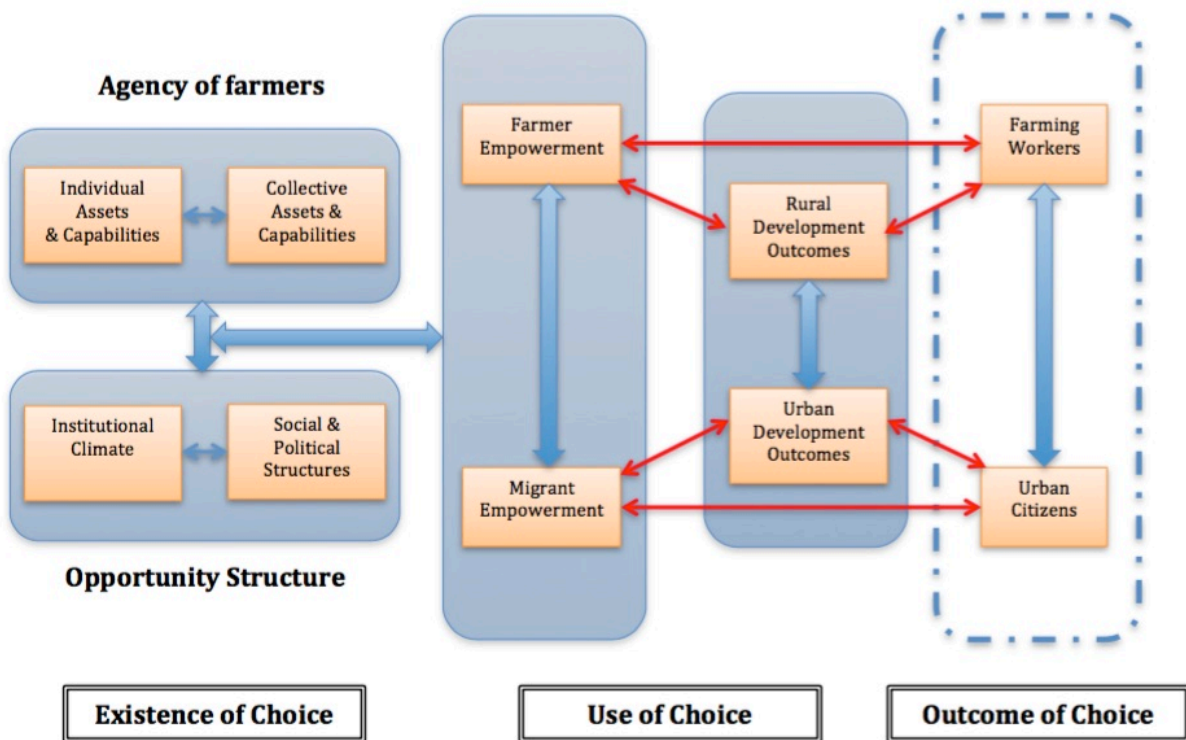
As described in Friedmann's (1992) alternative development framework, most developing countries' transitions into the globalized economy, in the form of urbanization, were based on capital accumulation. Capitalist development usually leads to the further exclusion and marginalization of poor farmers in the process. To correct this economy-biased development pattern, the growth of civil society mechanisms that may hold their governments accountable for the effects of policy choices are needed. Empowering individual households, which are the most basic component of a civil society, makes it possible for grassroots groups to negotiate collectively with the state, thus resulting in positive changes towards more inclusive development (Friedmann, 1992). Focusing on the household also makes it possible to examine gender relations at both domestic and community levels during migration, as well as in urbanization processes, since rural-urban migration is often a family strategy to diversify revenues (Stark, 1991), based on a gendered division of labor within the household (Jacka, 2014). It is possible that family members may be physically separated while confronting transitional difficulties, but the household is still considered the basic decision-making unit, where family members make decisions together and collaborate with each other.

In this sense, China's capacity for more people-oriented urbanization lies in the core value of empowering and facilitating farming households to make effective choices during the urbanization process. For this reason, this case study defines empowerment as expansion in farmers' assets and ability to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable governments that affect their lives (Narayan, 2005), so that they can make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 2001).

Informed by Friedmann's and the World Bank's empowerment frameworks, China's potential for more people-oriented urbanization requires empowerment opportunities for farmers as well as migrant workers (existence of choices), integrated rural-urban development outcomes (usage of choices) and rural-urban migration and integration (achievement of choices), as shown

in Figure 2.2. Empowerment of farmers is the most promising possible outcome for the interaction between farmers' agency and existing or revised opportunity structures. The World Bank's empowerment framework, which integrates the state, market, community, and development outcomes, is incorporated here with Friedmann's framework to demonstrate potentials for empowering farmers during China's urbanization initiatives. The proposed urbanization framework makes it possible to track and examine the compound impacts of a state's policies and the existing social and political structures in expanding the strategic choices available to rural populations between rural and urban destinations.

Figure 2.2 Framework for farmer-oriented urbanization in China



Source: adapted from World Bank's empowerment framework by the author

The farmer-oriented urbanization model under review here also features rural-urban migration while stressing full integration through unified rural-urban development outcomes. More specifically, through empowerment, farmers and migrant workers, who stay in rural areas, are able to contribute to and to benefit from rural development outcomes, while migrated workers

can affect and enjoy urban development outcomes. There may be cases where farmers may change their identity between that of farmer and migrant worker. However, this study focuses exclusively on the primary sites of residence between farmers and migrant workers, as actually practiced in contemporary China. As studies have shown, a decrease of migrant workers in the urban labor market may cause a labor shortage, which increases potential worker empowerment in negotiating the price of their labor in the market (Zhan & Huang, 2012). The higher labor price may attract more farmers to engage in urban labor sectors until the supply of labor surpasses the market demand. On the other hand, the decrease of rural laborers may also result in an increase of rural productivity or commodity prices. Thus, improved rural development outcomes may also attract migrant workers to the rural sector. Rural-urban migration may not cease until a relatively stable rural-urban integration equilibrium is reached, where no significant mobilization between rural-urban regions continues.

Unlike the forces shaping rural-urban equilibrium in the current mainstream economy-based models in China, which focus primarily on the rural-urban income gap, equilibrium of a more farmer-oriented model of urbanization would be based on developing rural-urban professional identities that represent the full extent of socioeconomic integration of farmers. The ultimate balance between rural and urban regions is centered on the full socioeconomic integration of farmers (migrants) to the local residential life they choose. More specifically, integrated development outcomes would enable farmers, as well as rural migrants, to make strategic decisions about whether to lead their life and earn their livelihoods in either rural or urban areas. Furthermore, their choices would imply that farmers, as well as circular migrants, could choose to stay in either rural or urban regions and should be able to fully integrate into their chosen local community. At an individual level, this means farmers may either become professional farm workers or transform themselves into urban citizens; migrant workers may thus become either urban citizens or farming workers. There may be cases where farmers engage in other occupations, but for the purposes and simplicity of this study, only farming workers engaged in agricultural activities are considered. Ultimately, the alternative urbanization model developed through this case study of Chongqing, and centered on empowering farmers, might reach a dynamic equilibrium where rural-urban migration may be still present, but its main features would focus on an exchange between professional farmers living in rural areas and urban citizens residing in urban regions.

2.3 Methodology

This section describes the rationale and methodology used to conduct a historical review of China's urbanization, to complete a comparison between current and proposed frameworks of urbanization, and to elaborate on the results of a thorough case study of Chongqing, in order to advocate for more farmer-oriented rural-urban migration policy suites localized to conditions in other jurisdictions in China.

2.3.1 China's urbanization trajectory and its practical implications

This chapter attempts to build its analysis based on a selective literature review of international as well as domestic Chinese studies on development, urbanization and empowerment. Whether the proposed framework actually reflects and reveals the domestic context and existing challenges must be taken into consideration. To do so, it is critical to understand how China's urbanization initially originated and how it evolved gradually over time. After a historical review of China's urbanization trajectory, the gap between the proposed farmer-oriented urbanization framework and China's historical urbanization practices is also revealed. Furthermore, the roles of the state, hukou, land system and farmers during both patterns of urbanization are identified and compared along the axis of existence of choice, use of choice, and outcome of choice.

2.3.2 Case study of Chongqing

Due to China's uneven economic development strategies, it is impractical to propose one universal urbanization framework for the whole nation. However, to verify and make linkages between China's current urbanization practices, and Chongqing's proposed model for rural-urban migration, a thorough case study is conducted. Chongqing's unique position, as a central-municipality under the direct control of the central government and as a pioneer in experimenting with and adopting innovative ways of realizing integrated rural-urban development, makes it suitable for the purpose of this analysis. The case study incorporates three steps:

Mapping Chongqing's hukou reform based on selective policy event analysis

Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform includes a series of policies in several fields, reflecting its holistic approach to hukou reform. The compound impacts of this policy package on farming households' empowerment will be examined together with an investigation of the impact

of individual policies. To achieve this, the policy events leading toward comprehensive hukou reform are presented first, in a chronological order. Second, the dynamics of Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform are mapped. In this way, the total impact of Chongqing's hukou practices on farmers can be revealed. Furthermore, whether Chongqing's policy design and implementation reflects the underlying rationale for an alternative urbanization model can also be examined.

Empirical evidence of the impact of Chongqing's hukou reform on farmers

To provide quantitative evidence for policy analysis, population and public spending data at both national and local levels is presented to show whether the empirical data coincides with the intended outcome of each policy approach tested. Furthermore, in order to address the imbalanced economic development currently operating within China and to show the unique attributes of Chongqing's reform model, a comparative policy analysis at the level of the nation and Chongqing is conducted. More specifically, total urban populations before and after Chongqing's hukou reform are compared with what is commonly occurring in the nation, to examine the actual outcomes of the reform; Chongqing's public spending on livelihood is also presented to test whether mainstreaming farmers in hukou reform is financially feasible and affordable.

Summary of Chongqing's hukou reform based on the farmer-oriented framework

This section provides a brief summary of the case study by integrating the conceptual and empirical outcomes from the previous two steps into a more people-oriented urbanization model. In this way, the roles of the state, hukou, land tenure system and farmers during Chongqing's hukou reform can be presented alongside the three dimensions of empowerment advocated by the farmer-oriented urbanization framework, including existence of choice, use of choice and outcome of choice.

2.4 China's urbanization trajectory and its practical implications

Possible ways of initiating inclusive and sustainable urbanization in China are guided by external experiences or lessons, but are also embedded in its own historical evolutionary path. Thus, this section first examines China's historical urbanization patterns with a focus on the role

of the state, hukou and land tenure system reforms. Secondly, a comparison between China's current urbanization practices and the proposed model is also conducted.

2.4.1 China's urbanization: between exclusion and inclusion of farmers

In order to understand China's current urbanization practices and the various issues that arise from this process, it is critical to understand how it initially originated and has evolved gradually over time. Thus, a historical review of China's urbanization course is provided. More specifically, the review begins by examining the role of local states in driving China's urbanization. Then, a description of hukou and land tenure reform processes is offered. The experience of farm households is then integrated into an analysis of each stage of China's urbanization. Finally, based on China's current urbanization patterns, the gap between its current approach and the proposed alternative urbanization pattern is also presented.

2.4.1.1 State's role: from industrialization to urbanization

In market economies, industrialization and urbanization usually go hand in hand. However, due to urban-centered development policies, industrialization before 1978 was mostly concentrated in urban areas, while China's post-reform industrial growth has been spatially concentrated in townships and villages, as induced by competition between central and local states. Current land urbanization models reflect local states' monopolies on land requisition and their entitlement to collect business taxes.

Rural industrialization: since the 1980s

One unique attribute of China's current political economy, as embedded in the decentralization of authoritarian governments is that the career incentives for regional officials are highly correlated with their economic performance (Tsui & Wang, 2004). Thus, the fiscal decentralization initiated in the 1980s drastically shifted the incentives for local governments to rely on local revenues generated by local economies. One of the most critical profits for local states was the tax revenue from local non-state owned enterprises (Oi, 1999). Among those, Township and Village Enterprises (TVEs) were the main contributors to local tax revenues. Thus, local governments were greatly motivated to promote the development of TVEs. As Oi (1991) pointed out, the tax generated by TVEs had increased from roughly 2 billion Yuan in 1978 to 205.8 billion Yuan in 1995.

While the tax revenue for local governments had increased dramatically, the central government's share of total tax revenue had reduced significantly from 40.5% in 1984 to 22% in 1993 (Kung, Xu & Zhou, 2013). The shrinking revenue for the central government led to the 1994 fiscal recentralization, which redefined tax rights between the national and regional governments and tightened fiscal control over revenues. To compensate for local governments' losses in tax revenue, the national government assigned other rights to local states, such as the business tax and revenues arising from a change in the ownership of land. While the 1994 fiscal reforms redefined local authorities' rights over transaction or value-added taxes, they still retained exclusive claim to enterprise income, which shifted their focus to promoting enterprise efficiency (Oi, 1999). The outcome of this change was the increasing privatization of TVEs that aimed at improving the investments in corporate efficiency begun in 1995.

From industrialization to urbanization: since 2002

The key factor that moved local governments' development strategies from fostering enterprise growth to that of urban growth was the reassignment of rights over the enterprise profit tax in 2002. This change reduced nearly 60% of the tax share for local governments, which further decreased the incentives of local states to promote privatization of TVEs, which had been aimed at enhancing enterprise productivity. The local governments were left with the business tax, which was to become an important source of revenue (Kung, Xu & Zhou, 2013). The business tax levied mainly upon the construction and real estate industries became the main activity that benefitted from future urbanization planning (Fu & Zhang, 2007). The changing relative importance of construction and real estate taxes in total budgetary revenues of local governments is reflected in the growing share of business tax from 20% in 1994 to 25% in 2003, while the share of transaction tax declined from 22% to 18% during the same period (Zhou, 2006). The recentralization of fiscal revenue since 1994, then, provided local governments with incentives to promote construction and infrastructure projects in China's hastening urbanization.

However, it is the huge revenues generated from conversion of farmland to construction land that enabled local authorities to be more active in urbanizing China (Kung, Xu & Zhou, 2013). By converting farmland for a variety of development projects, local governments were able to collect fees associated with rural-urban land conversion, as well as the income from leasing it, which were then classified as "extra-budgetary" revenues to be claimed by local

governments. This income accounts for a high proportion of local states' revenues. For example, the income collected from "extra-budgetary revenues" totaled only 242 billion Yuan nationwide between 1987 and 1994, while the amount reached 901 billion Yuan between 2001 and 2003 (NBS, 2007). On the other hand, local governments' increasing engagement in auctioning land usufruct rights to commercial and real estate usages further squeezed spending on either industrial or public welfare projects (Lin & Ho, 2005).

2.4.1.2 Hukou reforms: a mix of state-led and bottom-up approaches

The hukou system was first introduced in the 1950s with two primary purposes (Zhao, 2005). First, it was initiated to prevent the rural labor force from moving too rapidly into urban regions by offering urban citizens the exclusive privilege to be employed in urban labor markets. Second, it was adopted to provide basic living and relevant welfare programs to urban residents, and, meanwhile, to entitle rural residents with farming rights over rural land. The rationale behind its establishment was to guarantee that the national government would be able to feed the nation, while promoting industrial development under the constraint of extremely limited food and resources. During the specific period of time during which hukou was introduced, the system achieved its initial goal; however, it has been showing a negative impact on China's structural reform in transforming from a planned economy to a market economy. Thus, continuous hukou reform has accompanied China's economic transition. Notably, the hukou system is an institution associated with a wide range of social functions since its introduction, and thus operates as more than a simple population registration policy. In this sense, any attempt to study and reform the hukou system needs to review its historical evolution in order to understand how to integrate any new reforms into China's complex economic system (Cai, 2011). Historical hukou reform can be broken into three segments according to each important stage of China's economic transition: the early 1980s and the mid-1990s, mid-1990s to 2003, and the post-2003 period.

Incremental hukou reforms: the early 1980s and mid-1990s

Until the late 1980s the hukou system was very restrictive, making individual travel within China very difficult. People who wanted to travel anywhere else were required to have a permission letter issued by the local government. The initial hukou reform demand originated from the rural regions (Cheng & Selden, 1994). As one of the most successful bottom-up economic innovations in China's economic reform, the Household Contract Responsibility

System (HCRS) increased agricultural productivity profoundly. Consequently, many farmers were freed from farming activities and began to seek off-farm work opportunities. The development of TVEs generated increasing labor demand for farmers, however, the capacity of TVEs for absorbing rural surplus labor was very limited (Oi, 1999). Thus, at this stage, most labor migration was from the agricultural sector to non-agricultural sectors, and from villages to nearby towns.

The existing hukou system constrained the mobility of farmers and has therefore been challenged by China's massive rural surplus labor force (Taylor, 1989). Both national and local governments had to compromise in order to reconsider the pattern of "leaving the land without leaving the countryside." In 1983 the central government started to allow farmers to work outside their own towns, via long-distance transportation. In 1984, the government further deregulated institutional constraints to let farmers engage in regular work in nearby towns. In 1988, the hukou regulations were further relaxed to allow farmers to engage in enterprises or to run their own business in cities, if they could feed themselves (Goldstein, 1995). In the early 1990s, the centrally-planned rationing system⁸ had not yet been abandoned and hukou system reform was, therefore, still slow and limited.

Accelerating but limited hukou reforms: from mid 1990s to 2003

When a market economy was established as the goal of Chinese economic reforms and opening-up strategy, it was an important turning point for hukou reform. The major driving force for interprovincial labor migration is the combination of the emerging export-oriented sectors in the Eastern regions and increasing capital accumulation in urban private sectors (Chan, 1994). Accompanied by the growth of labor-intensive industries, female migration also increased dramatically. To address these changes in the labor market, a series of policy measures aiming to improve labor mobility was undertaken by local governments as a way of promoting economic growth. The rationing system, which was considered as one of the main obstacles limiting rural-urban migration, was firstly eliminated (Bao, Bodvarsson, Hou & Zhao, 2011). In 1998, the Ministry of Public Security officially announced that migrant workers' children could be

⁸ The ration system was imposed in the 1950s to control the production of food and to boost industrialization. Urban families were given grain coupons with which they could buy a certain amount of grain at a low state-imposed price. Any quantity exceeding the coupon quota would have to be purchased at market price. Meanwhile, farmers could only sell their crop at the market price once they had fulfilled the state-imposed quotas.

registered under one of the parents' urban hukou, and couples could change their hukou to reunite with urban families.

However, hukou reform during the 1990s was still very limited, since the core function of the hukou system remained unchanged (Cai, 2011). Thus, hukou system continued to create social discrimination against migrant workers in the urban labor market and excluded them from enjoying local social welfare (Knight et al., 1999). Even when local governments announced that they would abandon the hukou system in small towns, these reforms were considered merely symbolic, given limited employment opportunities and unequal social welfare rights between urban citizens and rural migrants (Wang & Cai, 2010).

New era of hukou reforms: after 2003

The year 2003 was a milestone for China's hukou reform. Many socioeconomic changes occurred in the Chinese economy and society, such as the first appearance of a labor shortage in coastal export-oriented sectors, an increase in workers' wages, the decrease of the agricultural population, and the governments' efforts to improve migrant workers' well-being, rather than merely promoting economic growth (Wang & Cai, 2010). The most challenging issue has involved the value-added social welfare programs associated with city sizes, where bigger cities were reluctant to relax hukou regulation of new residents, due to the perceived high costs of social programs (Fan, 2008). No significant reform policies were released to accelerate the process of hukou reform aimed at detaching social welfare benefits from local hukou until 2008, when the global financial crisis provided an opportunity to accelerate hukou reform (Cai, 2011).

In 2008, the global financial crisis caused substantial labor shortages in regions where export-oriented industries are concentrated. During and after the crisis, most export-oriented sectors had difficulty utilizing production factors to re-boost their manufacturing capacity, which has exerted great pressure on local governments (Zhu, 2007). To address the labor demand of local industries, local governments have been motivated to further relax the hukou system with a vision of absorbing and restoring labor force capacity for local economic development (Cai, 2011). With the same purpose, Guangdong, which was heavily affected by the financial crisis, initiated hukou to boost labor supply to its export-oriented sectors. However, for the interior regions and other underdeveloped places, land revenue is still the primary incentive for local governments to enhance economic development. Thus, hukou reforms are normally tied with

rural-urban land conversions in these regions. Chongqing, as an agrarian municipality, thus became one of the pioneer cities in hukou reform aiming at promoting integrated rural-urban development.

Given the vast diversity of rural-urban development within China, the degree of hukou reform varies from place to place. Since 2003, the central as well as local governments have carried out many pilot programs on hukou system reforms. During this stage, governments' incentives for hukou reform were more endogenous and stronger; thus, policy measures became more pragmatic and farmer friendly. Hukou reform in some places, such as Chongqing and Guangdong, has led to radical changes and achieved great progress; however, the focus is still to further relax the hukou system, rather than eliminating it.

2.4.1.3 Evolution of land tenure system and associated reforms

Unlike China's reform in other areas, land tenure practices stand out as an area where reforms have been left behind. Aligned with China's urbanization and hukou reforms presented above, changes related to the rural land tenure system are reviewed according to three phrases: between 1978 and 1984; from 1985 to 2002; since 2003.

Household Contract Responsibility System: from 1978 to 1984

After China's failure to collectivize agriculture through the People's Commune initiative,⁹ there was an imperative need to provide farmers with incentives to produce as well as to increase agricultural productivity. China's reform and opening-up policy, which also generated new socioeconomic and political opportunities within the society, enabled farmers to try and find effective ways to increase agricultural production. Consequently, in 1979, the early form of the HCRS was launched in a village called Xiaogang. The basic idea was to contract plots of land to individual farm households by empowering them with some, but not complete rights to the contracted land. The excluded land rights were held by collective entities above the household level. However, collective ownership was not clearly defined, as who could act as members of the collective are not clear. This may be due to path dependency on the preceding People's

⁹ The People's Commune, as a large collective unit that consists of smaller farmer collectives, was officially launched in 1958. Besides organizing productions, it was also a governmental and political authority before replaced by townships in 1983.

Commune system and a desire to preserve the socialist characteristics of China's rural land tenure system.

It is widely accepted that by extending usufruct rights and providing direct incentives to farm households for increasing productivity, the HCRS led to significant increases in agricultural production and productivity in the initial years. The adoption of HCRS contributed nearly 47% to total agricultural growth, while reducing substantially the income gap between rural and urban areas between 1978 and 1984 (Wang, 2005).

In 1982, China's Constitution (4th edition) further strengthened the public ownership of land. It clearly stipulated that all farmland should be owned by rural collectives and all urban and non-farmland would be owned by the state. While the state can take farmland from rural collectives in the name of the public interest by paying certain articulated forms of compensation, rural collectives are not allowed to sell, transfer or change the usage of the land. Since then, the ownership and use rights of rural farmlands have been separated. Farmers are allowed to operate on the land assigned to them for a specified period of time, but they cannot own the land. Although China established a national Land Contracting Law in 1984, which is the cornerstone of the development of HCRS, the exact bundle of rights extended to farm households remained unclearly defined. Even when farm households were restored as the primary production unit in agriculture, they had to confront a new form of tenure insecurity.

The HCRS is a "bottom-up" institutional change initiated by farmers during China's early transition from a planning economy to a market economy. Since the system was invented by farmers and is based on farmers' interests, it promoted efficiency, which leads directly to the dramatic increase of agricultural production between 1979 and 1984.

Slowing down of land tenure reforms: from 1985 to 2002

After 1985, rural land tenure reform slowed down due to the government's new focus on cities and the diminishing effects of the HCRS on agricultural productivity. Admittedly, by providing operational rights to farmers and guaranteeing that they would have complete control of their products during its initial period, the HCRS had advantages in increasing agricultural production. It did help to elevate the majority of farmers out of poverty. However, due to predominant egalitarian principles, farmland was allocated on a per capita basis. This created a very fragmented farming environment, with each household managing several plots that

altogether added up to only a fraction of a hectare. Due to the dispersive distribution of small plots of land and lack of venues for rural-urban and collaborative land transfer, HCRS failed to increase total agricultural production consistently, and gradually became a barrier to China's modernization of agriculture, by preventing economies of scale in that sector.

Meanwhile, China's rural-urban migration was accelerated by HCRS, releasing abundant numbers of people in the rural labor force from farming activities. The out-migration of rural laborers resulted in low efficiency in making use of the farmland. Furthermore, the transfer of rural homestead and collective construction land was constrained, which caused a huge waste of land. To tackle the problem, in 1986, the Land Management Law was adopted, stipulating that the use rights of land owned by the state and collectives could be transferrable. In 1988, China's revised Constitution also stated that land could be transferred legally; however, the transfer of rural land was still limited. On the other hand, accompanying fast urban economic growth, the so-called urban land market emerged and began to develop.

Rapid urban expansion caused the depletion of farmland at an unprecedented rate, particularly on the urban fringes where the most productive land was located. As a result, the Bureau of Land Administration was established in 1986. The bureau was responsible for and in charge of land policy reform, land allocation and acquisition, monitoring of land development, comprehensive land-use plans, and implementation of land laws.

During this period, HCRS, which was designed under very specific conditions, gradually failed to further improve agricultural production. Even though policy responses and relevant laws explicitly and continuously extended farm householders' rights to transfer their land-use rights to other families, they failed to provide concrete details on how, and under what circumstances, rental transactions could take place. Collective ownership was still not clearly defined.

State-led land conversion: after 2003

In 2003, the Rural Land Contract Law came into effect, to legally protect farmers' land-use rights and to regulate their transfer. It first extended farmers' contract period from 15 to 30 years. It further stated that land reallocations at the village level were absolutely prohibited and that partial reallocations could only be done under regulated conditions. One of the conditions is that partial-land reallocation can be feasible only when two-thirds of individual villagers agree to it. Thus, the Law not only increases the security of rural land tenure but also extends decision-making power to individual farmers, which was denied to all villagers before.

In 2007, the party and state passed China's first Property Law to legalize the ownership of private property, which further increased land tenure security in both rural and urban areas. Under the Law, farmers can retain and inherit their rights when the 30-year lease period expires. Furthermore, for the first time, the Property Law defined China's farmers' land use rights as usufruct rights, which legally permits better protection of farmers' interests.

In 2008, the Central Party Committee passed its Decision on Major Issues Concerning the Advancement of Rural Reform and Development, responding to further calls for farmland transfer, lease, and exchange options based on market mechanisms. It attempts to give the green light to trading off collectively-owned construction land without state acquisition, while simultaneously enhancing peasants' engagement in land transactions. In 2010, Central Party Committee Opinions on Scaling Up Integrated Urban-Rural Development (No. 1 File) further strengthened land centralized management through registration of contracted land use rights and promoting exchange of farmland use rights.

While all relevant Laws and policies mentioned above were designed to increase farmers' land tenure security in general, the actual effects on protecting and improving farm households' land rights are still quite limited. This result is mainly due to the vague definition of collective ownership on rural land and local governments' monopolies on land requisition, which denies farm households' participation in most policy-making processes. As local states have a monopoly over the requisition of collectively owned agricultural land, they are highly motivated to transfer state-owned land to private developers in order to take advantage of high land-leasing revenue. Thus, it is not surprising to see land-leasing revenue credits accounting for a large proportion of the fiscal income for local governments. The revenue from land conversion, in turn, has fueled China's land urbanization and produced a dramatic reduction of farmland in recent years, and the dissolution of thousands of rural villages.

The rapid reduction of farmland has alarmed top officials who believe that national food security is very important to maintaining not only sovereignty, but also social stability. The state council responded to the fast depletion of agricultural land by initiating the Decision of the State Council on Deepening Reform and Strengthening Land Administration in 2004. To ensure that construction land in urban and rural areas does not increase to the extent that it has detrimental effects on the total arable land necessary for national food security, the central government implemented a policy that links rural and urban "construction land" quotas in 2005. Under this

policy, the only way for local governments to extract land revenue is to use the available quota of rural reclamation land in exchange for an equal amount of urban construction land quota.

Although the state has officially set quotas on land conversion, local governments have strong incentives to circumvent the law (Ong, 2014). In 2008, Measures for the Administration of the Trial Work of Linking the Increase in Land Used for Urban Construction with the Decrease in Land Used for Rural Construction were initiated to further constrain local governments from transferring agricultural land to non-agricultural usage.

Besides implementing a series of policies to prevent depletion of arable land, since 2003, the central government has also conducted several pilot programs to find effective ways of reserving national agricultural land while promoting economic growth. Due to China's uneven economic development levels, with coastal provinces at a more advanced, and inland provinces at a less developed level, motivations informing rural land reforms in each region are different. For coastal provinces, local governments are more motivated to convert agricultural land to non-agricultural usage, due to the high value of urban construction land. For inner provinces, an imbalanced rural-urban development model featuring under-developed urban industrialization and a large rural labor surplus is still present.

The land voucher program initiated in Chongqing involves reallocating plots of land vacated by urbanized rural families. The motivation for Chongqing's municipal government to do so is the unified utilization of the quota of land vacated by rural-urban migrants. With the application of the land voucher system, land use and development are unified on a citywide basis, by linking rural and urban construction quotas to promote development in both areas. Sale of publically managed land vouchers, obtained through hukou transfer, generates revenues to be invested in housing and social programs, thereby ensuring that farmers who transfer to urban hukou have access to social welfare.

2.4.2 Disconnection between China's current and proposed urbanization models

Through this brief retrospective of China's historical urbanization processes, it is clear that local governments have been playing key roles in shaping China's current urbanization status. In most cases, farmers, who are the subject of urbanization, are excluded from decision-making processes at all levels. This distorted urbanization pattern can be addressed by engaging the state's role, hukou and land tenure reforms in light of the alternative urbanization framework modeled by Chongqing.

Since 1978, economic development has been at the top of the agenda for China. Promoting economic growth is the predominant motivation behind China's rural industrialization and its continuing transition from rural industrialization to urbanization. During the period of rural industrialization, gradually increasing rural-urban migration was the by-product of both the development of Town and Village Enterprises (TVEs) and the Household Contract Responsibility System (HCRS). As indicated, local officials were motivated to promote the development of TVEs in efforts to improve local economic performance. In this context, farmers were treated as the labor supply for the TVEs, while their mobilization was very limited, due to the hukou system.

The initial application of HCRS improved total agricultural productivity, which in turn released farmers from farming activities. When the increased number of migrants exceeds the labor demand of TVEs, local authorities are forced to relax the hukou system to some extent in order to accommodate migrating farmers. Under this regulatory regime, farmers are neither *de jure* nor *de facto* empowered to migrate permanently between rural and urban areas.

Since 1994, fiscal recentralization has gradually directed local governments to engage in promoting construction and infrastructure projects, which has resulted in the current urbanization of rural land. This urbanization pattern distinguishes China from the rest of the world, where urbanization is about transferring rural populations to urban sites. In the context of China, farmers, whose land rights are not clearly defined, are considered attached to the land. The direct result is that China's farmers are further marginalized and excluded from policy-making processes and from sharing the benefits of on-going urbanization. Even though continuous moral justifications have led to modifications of the hukou and land tenure systems, a key incentive for the central government is still based on economic growth, while retaining CPC power. Since local states have a monopoly on land requisition and the enormous revenue from converting agricultural land to urban construction usage, they are not easily persuaded to transfer urban hukou identity and associated benefits to farmers. One possible explanation is that land conversion is beneficial to local states while transforming farmers to urban citizens is seen as a financial burden.

Thus, the interaction between the state and farmers is unilateral, where the state has absolute power over farmers. Unless farmers can hold the government accountable to some extent, inclusive development with mutual benefits may not be generated. Under the current

political environment in China, it is only possible for local states to begin to extend hukou franchise to farmers when their mutual benefit is fulfilled. In this sense, use of rural land that connects the economic and social interests of both the state and farmers is a potential option. This perspective is confirmed by land conversion that happens in most urban fringes where the state is motivated by high land revenue to transform local farmers to urban citizens. In some cases, the value-added land enables farmers to negotiate with the local state for terms that favor both parties. A similar but radical mechanism applies to the majority of farmers that live far away from urban centers. An integrated rural-urban land market that connects rural land with urban market prices may have empowering effects on farmers' roles in negotiating with the state, even when they live at a distance from urban centers.

Furthermore, to identify the different degree of possible empowerment of farmers between the two patterns of urbanization, a comparison between the current land-driven and farmer-oriented urbanization is conducted. As shown in Table 2.1, the role of the state, hukou system, land tenure system and farmers are presented, according to the three stages of empowerment: existence of choice, use of choice, and outcome of choice. In the case of China's current urbanization model, even when there are opportunities through which farmers may make strategic life decisions between rural and urban destinations, the existing institutions and state authorities act to prevent farmers from actually making use of those opportunities. This may be due mainly to the fact that farmers' well-being is neither the first priority for the local state, nor is their inclusion valued in national policy processes. Thus, it is not surprising to note that diverse outcomes of choice exist, due to farmers' different capacities for making use of the available opportunities.

As to the people-oriented urbanization framework operating in Chongqing, the state's policy, centered on farmers, is designed to facilitate farmers' empowerment during the urbanization process. Furthermore, policy decentralization allows the state to adjust policy practices to reflect farmers' needs. In this sense, the government not only provides farmers with the opportunity to choose but also makes sure that farmers are able to make use of the available choices. This may still lead to different outcomes due to farmers' different levels of assets and capability. However, the equal opportunity for farmers to identify and use the choice to shift the site of their livelihood in order to achieve the goals they want is the key difference between the two patterns of urbanization.

Table 2.1 Comparison between China's current and proposed urbanization

	China's Current Urbanization	China's People-Oriented Urbanization
Existence of Choice		
State	Commit to integrated rural-urban development; policy centered on itself	Commit to integrated rural-urban development; policy centered on farmers
Hukou system	Moving from exclusion to partial integration of farmers in urban areas	Full integration of farmers in urban areas
Land tenure system	Leading to unequal land revenue sharing between the state and farmers	Extending farmers' land rights and improving land benefits sharing
Farmer (migrant)	Opportunity to freely migrate between rural and urban destinations but with limited access to urban welfare	Opportunity to freely migrate and settle down between rural and urban destinations
Use of Choice		
State	Further exclusion; piecemeal policy responses	Further inclusion; a holistic policy approach
Hukou system	Hukou transfer with costs (i.e. land rights); unequal opportunity and welfare as local citizens	Hukou transfer without costs; Equal opportunity and welfare as local citizens
Land tenure system	State is supreme to farmers' rights; administrative measures discourage rural land market	Return land rights to farmers; integrated rural-urban land market
Farmer (migrant)	Cannot make effective decisions between rural and urban destinations constrained by resources and institutional structure; try to obtain comparative advantages between rural and urban regions	Can utilize available resources to make their strategic decisions between rural and urban destinations
Outcome of Choice		
State	Compelling, self-interest maximizing and inclusion	Facilitating, accountability and inclusion
Hukou system	State-led reforms excluding farmers	Farmer-oriented reforms coordinated with land tenure system
Land tenure system	State-led reforms strengthening the unequal positions between the state and farmers	Farmer-oriented reforms coordinated with hukou system
Farmer (migrant)	Urban citizens (very few); circular migrant workers (substantial); mix of peasant farmers (large)*	Urban citizens and professional farmers

*In the case of land requisition and high-density resettlement, farmers are forced to become citizens and "farming workers" with no choice. Thus, farmers in these situations are not included in the table. Notably, due to individual farmers' different level of assets and capabilities their ability to use their choices is also diverse. While admitting there are other possibilities, only three general outcomes are presented here.

Source: Compiled by the author

2.5 Case Study of Chongqing

Chongqing city plays an important role in China's current and future reform and restructuring. It is one of the central municipalities with a big rural population and has been a

pioneer in experimenting with and adopting innovative ways of realizing integrated rural-urban development, while providing new insights into national practices. Admitting its efforts and success in some key fields, there are divergent opinions on Chongqing's practices. Some scholars argue that Chongqing's practice relies heavily on the strong role of the government and may not sustain itself in the long run (Miller, 2012; Wen, 2014), while others consider Chongqing's experience to have break-through significance for China's balanced growth (Huang, 2011; Zhou, 2014). Rather than evaluating specific aspects of Chongqing's pilot practices, this study tries to extract key insights from Chongqing's series of coordinated institutional reform policies. Thus, the case study's objective is first to show the rationale behind Chongqing's policy design and implementation as related to its comprehensive hukou reform; then, the study attempts to describe the interaction between the local policy dynamics and current urbanization practices, through which the logic behind Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform is shown.

2.5.1 General information on Chongqing

Chongqing is located in Southwestern China, as shown in Figure 2.3. It is one of the four central municipalities in China that are directly under the central government's administration as well as having local autonomy. Unlike its national counterparts, Chongqing is a city-province with a metropolitan core of 648 km² and a vast rural area of nearly 81,000km², which is more than two times the total area of the other three centrally-managed municipalities. In 2015, Chongqing's total population was 33 million, with 20 million agricultural and 13 million non-agricultural citizens, respectively.

Due to its important geographical location, Chongqing has long been the economic and political center that bridges Western and Eastern regions of China. In recent years, Chongqing has gained an international as well as domestic reputation due to the so-called "Chongqing model." The model refers to a series of policies addressing complexities in the social, economic and political systems through flexible policy designs and reforms, which promotes local economic growth and also brings equitable development to the city.

In 2007, Chongqing was selected as one of the pilot regions for experimenting with national integrated rural-urban development. This outcome motivates Chongqing to spend more efforts on furthering hukou reform, both to balance rural-urban development and specifically to improve the overall well-being of farmers, while promoting the local economy. Through the

years, Chongqing has been given much discretion and support from the central government, which allows it to try new ideas without too much constraint.

Figure 2.3 Chongqing's geographic location in China



Source: Derived from Hua (2014)

Later in 2007, Chongqing initiated its pilot hukou reform in Jiulongpo district, wishing to hasten rural-urban hukou transfer. However, the reform did not achieve the expected outcome, due to its requirement that farmers give up land rights when transferring to urban hukou status. To improve land use efficiency in rural areas, Chongqing set up the nation's first land exchange market to facilitate land voucher transactions in 2008. Through the exchange of rural-urban land quota at competitive market prices, rural collectives and farmers obtained much higher land revenue than before. The increased land profit motivates farmers to engage increasingly in the trade of abandoned collective construction land and homesteads for land quotas.

In 2010, Chongqing implemented the first public housing project in China. The project was designed to accommodate low-income groups of people, disregarding their hukou status. By 2013, nearly 52% of the residents were migrant workers, and 36% of the total was local urbanites.

In August 2010, Chongqing also adopted comprehensive hukou reform, wishing to facilitate migrant workers' hukou transfer. Unlike any other hukou reforms in China, Chongqing's reform adopted a holistic approach that went beyond the standard hukou system,

integrating land, housing, and social security systems into the policy design. The plan for the first phase was to transfer 3 million migrant rural workers to urban citizenship during 2010 to 2011. By the end of 2011, more than 3.1 million new urban citizens lived in Chongqing. In 2015, Chongqing's nominal urbanization rate reached 61%, representing 30 million urban residents. In the same year, the built-up urban area increased 50-60 km², which was at a compatible rate with the increase of new urban dwellers, now around 500,000-600,000 for the year.

2.5.2 Key policy events in Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform

In this section, historical policy events related to Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform are shown as follows: Chongqing's pilot hukou reform in Jiulongpo district in 2007; the establishment of the land voucher system in 2008; the public rental housing project in 2010; and Chongqing's Comprehensive Planning for Rural-Urban Hukou Reform in 2010. Each policy event is presented below, highlighting the objectives and outcomes of policy models.

2.5.2.1 Pilot hukou reform in Jiulongpo

Background

In 2007, urban citizens with hukou only constituted 27% of the total 32 million population of Chongqing. The income gap between the surrounding rural and urban regions was 1:4. In May 2007, Jiulongpo district was selected as the first demonstration area for Chongqing's comprehensive plan of balancing urban and rural development. In June, the central government approved Chongqing Municipality as the pilot region for comprehensive reform of rural-urban integration. The purpose was to enable Chongqing to take the lead in exploring ways of establishing an institutional model that promotes integrated rural-urban development.

Objectives

Jiulongpo's hukou reform objective was designed to seek possible ways of enhancing Chongqing's urbanization through experimental reforms in hukou policy and exchange practices within the region. The goal was to improve rural-urban livelihood through integrated reforms of hukou, land tenure, public finance, rural credit, public administration and social security systems.

Highlights of the policy

- Farmers, who earn stable non-agricultural revenue and would like to give up their farmland and homesteads, are allowed to become newly registered urban citizens.
- The village is the basic unit for hukou transfer; all who live in the same villages have the chance to become new citizens and live in concentrated settlement zones in urban areas
- New urbanites can enjoy equal basic public services with local citizens

Outcome

The hukou reform in Jiulongpo was limited in both magnitude and area. The expected outcome was not achieved due partly to the unmatched motivations between the government and farmers' needs and interests, where farmers are reluctant to exchange land for their urban hukou identity. Other reasons may include the high threshold for hukou transfer, mandated abandonment of land rights after getting urban hukou, unaffordable housing prices, and discrimination against rural citizens newly transferred to urban hukou.

2.5.2.2 Chongqing's land voucher program

Background

Due to local governments' monopoly position in land conversion, it is possible for local states to appropriate rural land freely. To ensure the total arable land necessary for national grain security, the central government implemented a policy that links rural and urban "construction land" quotas since 2005 (Ministry of Land and Resources, 2005). With strict central control over arable land use, the only way that local governments can exploit land is to reclaim plots of contracted arable land or abandoned housing sites as urban land, and use urban land quotas to balance the reclamation and exploitation of rural lands. This policy does limit the local state's motivation for infinite land acquisition. However, it does not provide strong incentives for the state to pay attention to the quality of reclaimed land. Furthermore, due to the lack of a land exchange market for rural land, the benefits from rural-urban land conversion are not evenly distributed between rural and urban regions.

Chongqing city is located in a mountainous area, which means it has very limited land for either urban usage or rural agriculture. On the other hand, as farmers migrate or settle down in

urban areas, they leave behind or abandon their residential units in rural areas. To mitigate the conflict between increasing land demand for urban development and unused rural land resources, Chongqing began to seek an alternative solution to linking rural and urban land quotas in an effective way. In 2008, Chongqing's Rural Land Exchange was set up to facilitate land voucher transactions between rural and urban regions. One year later, the State Council issued Opinions on Accelerating Chongqing's Integrated Rural-Urban Reform and Development in order to officially recognize Chongqing's Land Voucher program.

Objectives

To improve the land use efficiency in both rural and urban areas while reserving arable land

Highlights of the policy

- Local governments compensate for plots of contracted arable land and housing sites based on land expropriation regulations and the current price of urban land vouchers.
- As converting housing sites to arable land must be reclaimed in their original localities, their land use quota is traded within the municipality, and the quota may be used as construction land in other parts of the municipality.
- Transferred households can reserve their claiming rights of land for 3 years, so that they can return to their previous status if they want.

Outcome

By 2014, the total transaction of land vouchers reached 24,000 acres, generating 30 billion Yuan (4.6 billion dollars) of capital, from which 75% of the total goes to rural collectives and individual farmers. The land voucher program improves land use efficiency between rural and urban Chongqing, and improves farmers' share of land benefits through the land market.

2.5.2.3 Public rental housing in Chongqing

Background

As Chongqing's hukou reform deepens, how to accommodate increasing urban residents, including migrant workers, new university graduates and other low-income people, become pressing issues for the government. To reconcile and accommodate the enormous amount of

population transfer, the city has undertaken extensive research on possible ways to move forward since late 2009. In July 2010, guided by *Interim Measures on Management of public rental housing in Chongqing*, Chongqing established its first Bureau of Public Housing Administration, especially to manage public housing projects. In later July, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of PRC (MOHURD) issued *Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Public Rental Housing*, which set up a national plan to build 36 million units of subsidized housing by 2015.

Objectives:

Public rental housing is used to accommodate local citizens as well as existing migrant workers. More specifically, Chongqing finished 30 million m² of subsidized public rental housing during the first period from 2010 to 2012, while continuing to provide another 10 million m² until 2020.

Highlights of the policy:

- Rental units are open to any low-income individuals or family regardless of their hukou status
- With units at 40-60 m², the project can provide housing for nearly 800,000 households or 2.4 million people
- Rent is normally 60% of the market price
- After living there for 5 years, a unit can be purchased by the individual; however, the housing cannot be sold to the market

Outcome

By 2013, Chongqing had completed 40 million m² of public rental housing, which accommodates 630,000 people in 240,000 units (Chongqing Bureau of Public Housing Administration, 2012). Through the public housing program, Chongqing established a two-track system of housing supply between the government and market. While some of the benefits may have accrued to those with influence in the society, the fact remains that substantial improvement in conditions for rural to urban migration was achieved.

2.5.2.4 Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform

Background

Since Chongqing was chosen as the Experimental Zone of Integrated Rural-Urban Development, it has been testing and initiating a series of institutional and policy changes, in such areas as hukou, land tenure system, social security and public housing. The accumulated experience in these fields enables Chongqing to further reform the hukou system, which is considered as key barriers of enhancing integrated rural-urban development. Consequently, in 2010, the Chongqing government issued Recommendations Regarding Comprehensive Planning for Rural-Urban Hukou Reform.

Objectives

The project is designed to address the various inequalities that farmers face in the process of hukou transfer and to improve the living standards of rural people by reducing the massive labor surplus in rural Chongqing.

Highlights of the policy

- A policy package that integrates previous and current policy reforms in hukou, land tenure, social security, rural credit market, public finance and public administration systems
- Migrant workers who have worked and undertaken business for a certain period of time, bought a house, invested, or who pay taxes of a certain amount in the destination cities are eligible to obtain local hukou status and to receive equal access to social welfare programs, such as social insurance, public rental housing, education and medical care
- New citizens can keep rights to their farmland and rural homestead for at least 3 years

Outcome

During 2010 and 2011, 3 million migrant workers transferred to urban hukou. By 2014, 4 million farmers as well as migrant workers had registered as urban citizens. The rural-urban

migration and integration to urban areas continues to increase without pressing Chongqing's public finances (Chongqing Bureau of Statistics, 2009-2012).

2.5.2.5 Mapping the dynamics of Chongqing's hukou reform

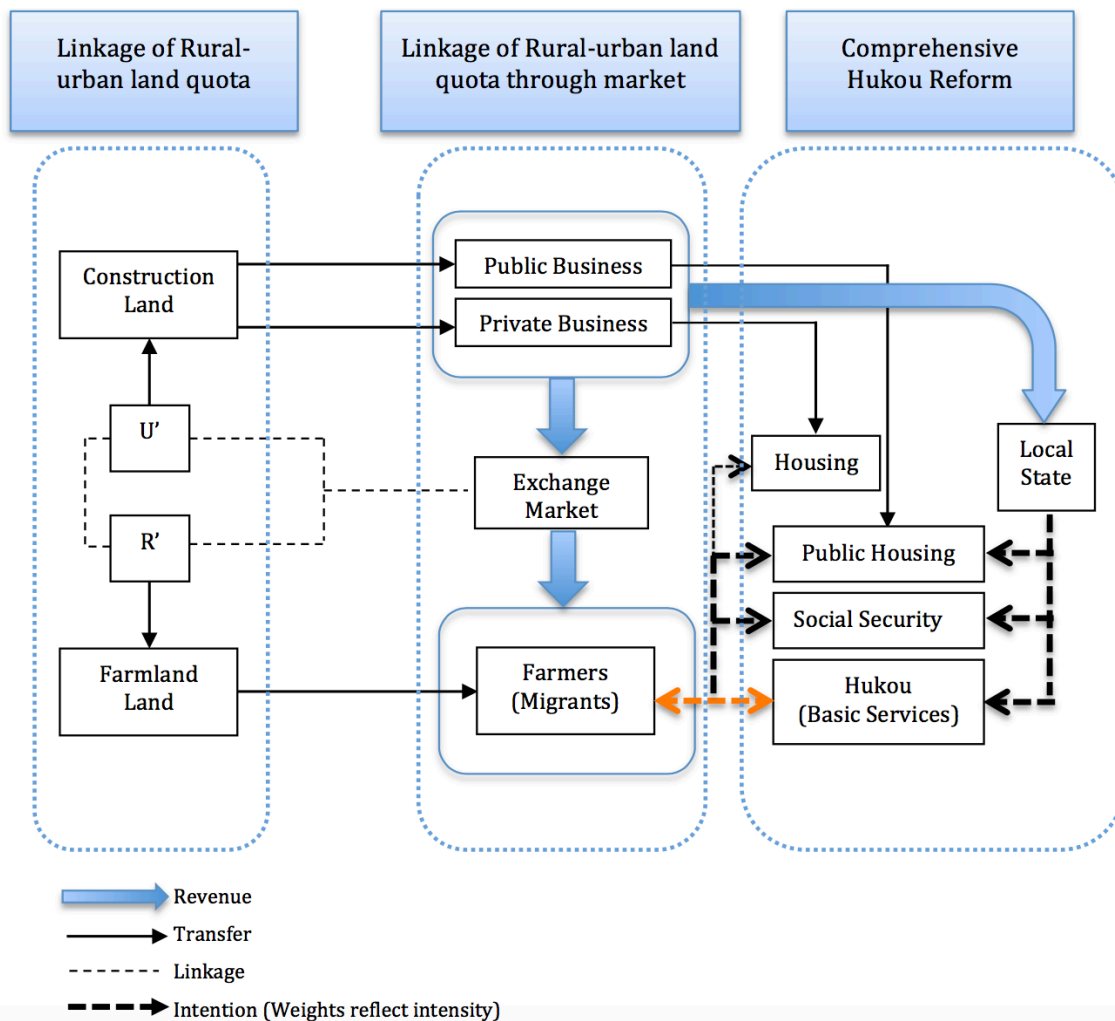
Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform takes a holistic approach, focusing on the coordination among hukou, land tenure, social security, financing and public housing reforms. More specifically, the outcome of Chongqing's hukou reform is based on the joint forces of its existing land voucher program, public housing policy and newly adopted hukou policy.

The land voucher program initiated in 2008 was a starting point for Chongqing's hukou reform. In Figure 2.4, "Linkage of rural-urban land quota" and "Linkage of rural-urban land quota through the market" together describe the land voucher program. The exchange of rural-urban land quota through a land exchange market expanded individual farmers' assets and capability to make strategic life choices, and also provided the state with sufficient land reserves and financing measures for later policy initiatives aiming at improving farmers' welfare. Through the land exchange market, collective construction land - including farmers' old homesteads and other abandoned land - can be capitalized at a price equivalent to an urban market price. In this way, farmers not only enjoy additional arable land, but also share in the increased land revenue. Admittedly, the land exchange market is not a fully functional market, as it is still strictly controlled by the local government. However, the state is not competing with farmers for the land benefits. Rather, Chongqing's government enacts its sovereignty to protect farmers' land rights and guarantee that land reclamation procedures are strictly carried out. Furthermore, the frequent engagement of the state-owned corporations in the bidding process, which is normally criticized as presenting extensive administrative influence on public affairs, actually enables Chongqing to have sufficient land reserves for public usage.

Abundant land reserves have allowed Chongqing to implement the biggest public housing project in China, building 30 million m² of subsidized public rental housing from 2010 to 2012. The land reserves also enabled Chongqing to extend public housing to all low-income groups of people, disregarding their hukou status. According to DRC's (2011) report, affordable housing was a critical factor for migrant workers seeking to settle down in destination cities. Thus, Chongqing's public housing project provides migrant workers as well as farmers with a strong "pulling" force to move their livelihood to urban Chongqing. Moreover, the coexistence of public and commercial housing also creates a "two-track housing system" in Chongqing, which enables

the government to manage the price of real estate through the balancing provision of public housing. Hence, even though Chongqing's government still plays a critical role in land requisition and holds massive land reserves, local farmers as well as migrants do not face rapidly rising housing costs. Rather, they can either purchase commercial space or rent public housing in order to settle down in cities.

Figure 2.4 Mapping Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform



Source: Adapted from Chongqing's Comprehensive Hukou Reform Plan (2010)

Consequently, the land voucher and public housing program became the foundation for Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform in 2010. Unlike hukou reforms in other regions of China, Chongqing offers equal public services to migrant workers as well as farmers, as compared with local citizens. Furthermore, Chongqing allows farmers to transfer their hukou

without giving up their rural land entitlement for at least three years. These two measures expand farmers' agency to some extent so that they can choose to settle down in either urban or rural regions, a choice which was not available to farmers during China's previous hukou reforms.

In retrospect, Chongqing's hukou reform has become a dynamic process engaging the local state, farmers and market forces to continuously expand the agency of individual farmers as well as migrant workers, so that they are able to make decisions on whether to lead their life and livelihood in rural or urban areas. The underlying motivation for the Chongqing government to initiate these policies on land and hukou reforms is gradually "returning rights and endowing land with rights." (Huang, 2011) What is more important is that Chongqing's government is not only willing to decentralize its authority to engage farmers, but is also committed to implementing policies that address farmers' needs.

2.5.3 Empirical evidence on Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reforms

After examining the dynamics of Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform, it is necessary to link the policy conceptualization with practice by seeking empirical evidence regarding the relationship between each policy and its impact on ordinary farmers, as well as on migrant households' decisions regarding best pathways to pursuing their private life in either urban or rural regions. Instead of measuring de facto decision-outcomes of individual households, historical data about urban populations, non-agricultural populations,¹⁰ public spending on livelihood¹¹ and public rental housing at different levels of the territory are used as an approximate measurement.

2.5.3.1 Impacts of hukou policies on Chongqing's urban population

To better capture urban population trends in Chongqing, a comparison of urban population levels is first conducted between Chongqing and the nation. Urbanization level is normally calculated based on the proportion of urban residents to the total population (NBS, 2010). Urban residents are defined as those who live in cities for at least 6 months of the year (NBS, 2005a). In this sense, the urbanization level measures the total amount of people who live

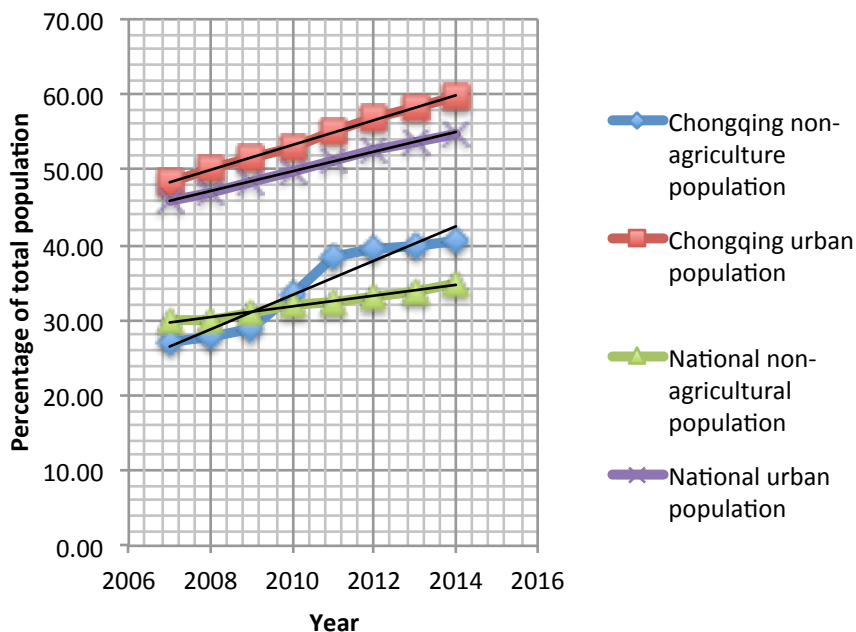
¹⁰ Non-agricultural population refers to urban residents who have urban hukou and engage in non-agricultural production.

¹¹ Public spending on livelihood includes public expenditure on education, income, social security, and public health (NBS, 2000).

in the city for at least six months within a year rather than representing the real urbanized rate of people who obtain a local hukou identity.

As shown in Figure 2.5, Chongqing presents a much steeper increase in urban population than the nation from 2007 to 2014. One possible explanation could be the local relaxation of the hukou system, since it is widely accepted that hukou poses hardships for those migrants who want to settle in destination cities (Chan & Buckingham, 2008). Through the years, Chongqing focused on promoting the local economy while continuously relaxing the hukou system to extend social services to local urban residents, disregarding their hukou identity. For example, one of Chongqing's policies on public housing is to charge 1 Yuan (about 0.15 USD) for each migrant worker's monthly rent. The extension of basic public services, like public housing, to urban residents is definitely attractive to potential migrant workers and enables them to secure a better livelihood in Chongqing. Hukou reforms in other provinces do not have the same magnitude as in Chongqing. As a result, Chongqing is becoming increasingly attractive to rural migrants, both socially and economically.

Figure 2.5 Percentage of urban and non-agricultural of total population



Source: China Year Book (2008-2015), Chongqing Year Book (2008-2015)

The impact of Chongqing's hukou reform on its urban population becomes more clear and significant, when comparing the trends of urban non-agricultural population and urban residential levels between it and the nation. It is believed that the increase of the non-agricultural population in China is mainly due to the hukou transfer of migrant workers as well as farmers (Cai, 2011). By differentiating the non-agricultural population and urban residents, Cai (2011) found that the national growth of urban populations was generally faster than of non-agricultural populations from 1990 to 2009. More specifically, the gap between the two rates has been widening dramatically since 1995.

As Figure 5 shows, Chongqing's urban population growth presents a steeper increase than the national average level but its non-agricultural population also demonstrates sharper growth than for the nation. Furthermore, unlike the widening gap between the rate of urban and registered populations at the national level, Chongqing shows a slight convergence between the two rates. This trend reflects some unique features of Chongqing's hukou reform.

In the case of Chongqing, there was a big leap in the non-agricultural population rate between 2009 and 2011, which was right after Chongqing's adoption of its comprehensive hukou reform in 2010. Notably, since 2012, the growth of registered urban residents now increases flatly. The sharp contrast in growth rates before and after 2012 may be due to the fact that Chongqing's hukou relaxation successfully attracted the targeted population to transfer their rural to urban hukou, and the remaining farmers and migrant workers were able to make their own decisions on whether to transfer their hukou, since Chongqing's hukou reform promises to entitle newcomers with equal benefits, as for local citizens. More specifically, Chongqing's hukou reform aims at transferring those who already live in the urban areas and are most likely to settle down in the city, including students, small business owners and migrant workers. Thus, the sharp increase of registered local residents from 2010 to 2011 marks the outcome of the targeted population transferring their hukou to cities. This result also shows that Chongqing's hukou reform, at this stage, is very effective in facilitating and transforming people's intentions into actual actions.

After the initial hukou transfer of the majority, there may be two additional contributors to the flatter increase in the non-agricultural population since 2012. One is that the rest of the targeted population may be below the threshold of quick hukou transfer, or they are uncertain about their future urban lives due to their relatively insufficient resources and skills. Thus, the

growth of registered urbanites presents a slow but nevertheless steady increase. Another case may be that most farmers staying behind are cautious about their decisions on whether to transfer their rural to urban hukou, or are staying in rural areas to maintain their daily livelihoods and local connections. Even though urban hukou provides much more than they used to have, it is still difficult for them to quit the life style they have been used to for years. Furthermore, there may be a continuous struggle for farm households that have more need for dependents, resources, skills and laborers on the farm.

Unlike hukou reforms in other regions, the Chongqing government provides new citizens with equal and extended public services, without strong enforcement of rural-urban boundaries. Given that there is no significant cost associated with farmers' decisions, farmers either take time to make their final choices or to change their decisions afterward. Thus, a modest and dynamic redistribution between rural and urban regions is obtained.

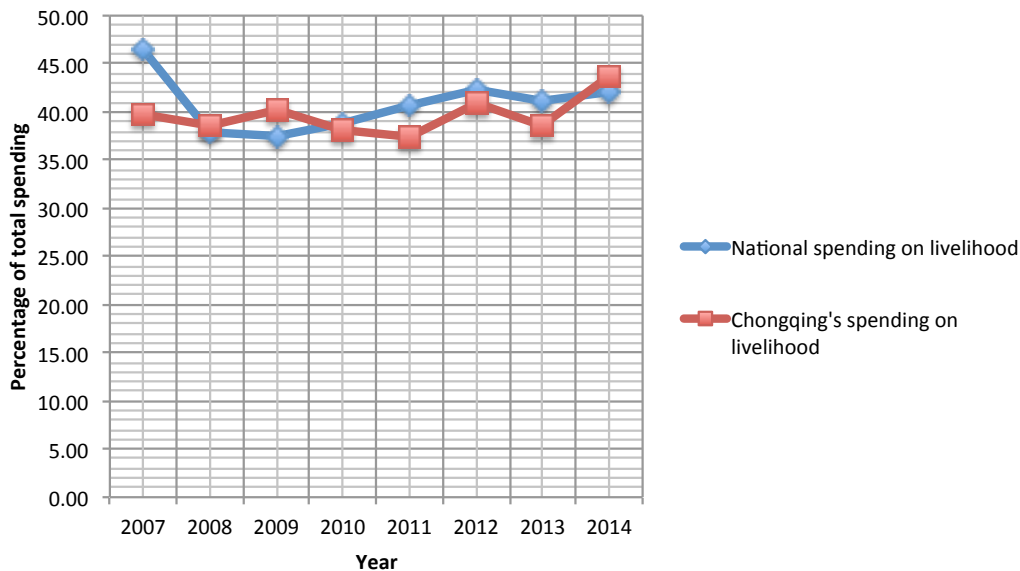
2.5.3.2 Changes in public spending on livelihood

Studies have shown that one of the reasons that local states are not willing to make substantial improvements to the hukou system is the associated costs of transferring migrants as well as farmers to urban citizenship (DRC, 2011). Based on DRC's (2011) calculation, the short-term cost for urbanizing one migrant worker was around 24,000 Yuan while the long-term cost for the state was 80,000 Yuan, based on data available from 2009. In this sense, public spending on livelihood, which is the key component of the short-term cost, should have increased as Chongqing initiated hukou relaxation in 2010.

However, according to Figure 6, the public spending on livelihood at the end of 2010 was less than 2009 and it kept falling through 2011. Chongqing's public spending on livelihood is higher than the average level in China between 2008 and 2010, while its spending is now lower than the national level, using data from 2011 to 2014. This may be because the core function of the 2010 comprehensive hukou reform was to create a positive policy environment for farmers by synthesizing existing policy innovations in the field of land tenure, social security, and education. What this means is that up-front spending may be higher, but the cost gradually decreases when the majority of migrant workers become new urban citizens, since the increased tax revenue and consumption power from these new citizens offset the total costs of governments' spending on livelihood. In this sense, the fluctuation of Chongqing's spending on livelihood between 2007 and 2014 reflects the different stages of Chongqing's hukou reform process.

While Chongqing's non-agricultural population has increased dramatically from 29% in 2009 to 40.63% in 2014, the spending of Chongqing on citizen livelihood does not increase dramatically, given the relatively flat curve of its spending on livelihood. As shown in Figure 2.6, in 2014, while Chongqing's spending on livelihood surpassed the national level, both show an increase since 2013. The convergence of increasing livelihood spending may demonstrate that there may be an agreement on the importance of improving people's welfare among governments. If this is the case, it may be due to the shift of policy and public discourse from economy-focused to people-oriented development.

Figure 2.6 Percentage of livelihood spending of total public spending



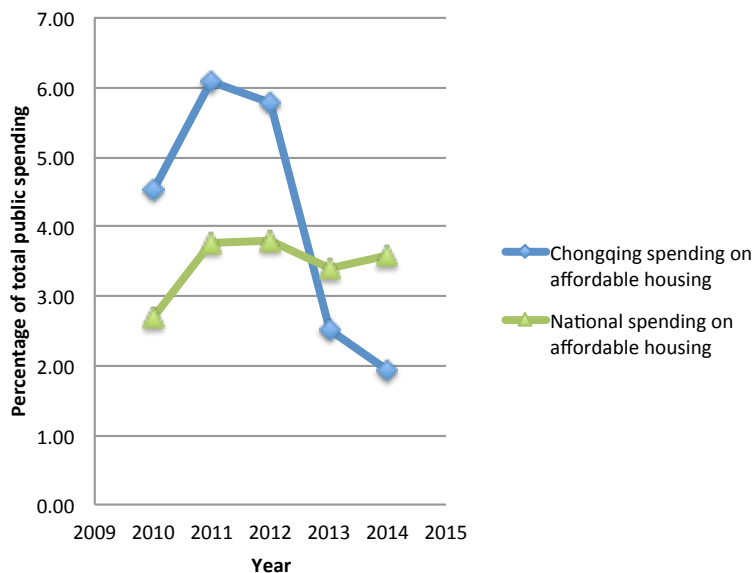
Source: China Year Book (2008-2015), Chongqing Year Book (2008-2015)

In March 2010, Chongqing initiated the first public housing program to provide affordable houses for local low-income people, including urban citizens, migrant workers and new citizens. The program proposed to build 30 million square meters of public apartments to accommodate nearly 2 million residents in 3 years. As shown in Figure 2.7, Chongqing's public spending rate for affordable housing jumped from 4.5% to 6% between 2010 and 2011, then decreased gradually to about 5.8% in 2012 and dropped sharply to 2.5% in 2013.

According to Chongqing Bureau of Statistics (2014), the sharp decrease in spending was due to the completion of most of the public housing projects at the end of 2013. Chongqing witnessed a dramatic increase in its non-agricultural population as well as its urban population

during the same period. It can also be seen that Chongqing's spending on affordable housing combined is nearly 2% higher than the national level. This is mainly due to Chongqing's commitment to spending on public housing projects. In this sense, the public housing program, as a key component of Chongqing's hukou reform, may be effective in relocating new citizens to urban areas. Admittedly, from 2010 to 2012, Chongqing's spending on public housing was quite high compared to its counterparts in other regions. However, it is not significantly higher, taking its total spending on livelihood into account as shown in Figure 2.7. This further confirms that although the up-front costs of setting the initial stage for engaging farmers in hukou reform may be high, the long-term costs may be absorbed and shared among key players, when policy programs are pushed forward in a coordinated way.

Figure 2.7 Percentage of total public spending on affordable housing



Source: China Year Book (2008-2015), Chongqing Year Book (2008-2015)

2.5.4 Summary of the case study

Notably, approval and support from the central government is critical to Chongqing's pilot reforms in land, housing, social security and hukou systems; however, Chongqing's success is also due to its priority and determination in facilitating rural-urban integrated development to enhance its people's well-being. Thus, it is not hard to understand why the Chongqing

government is willing to return land rights and associated revenue to farmers (migrants), when most local states are motivated to extract land revenue by displacing farmers.

Chongqing's policy package fully utilizes the leverage of the existing institutional arrangements of the hukou and land tenure systems together with innovative housing programs to facilitate social welfare, while expanding farmers' choices, thereby inducing farmers to reveal their capacities and interests, such as their ability to earn a living in cities and their residential preferences. Chongqing's policy package has also proven to be financially affordable, based on historical data on livelihood spending from 2007 to 2014. This clears past concerns about providing farmers with full hukou status and sharing land revenue as a cost that exceeds what local states can afford, which have limited the extent of reforms in hukou and land systems elsewhere. Chongqing's case also confirms that further policy decentralization to expand farmers' agency does not necessarily result in chaos or social instability; rather, it can ultimately reduce the local government's administrative costs as well as enhance the reform process. The case study of Chongqing's comprehensive hukou reform is shown in details in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Summary of Chongqing's farmer-oriented hukou reform

	Chongqing's Hukou Reform	Supporting Evidence
Existence of Choice		
State	Selected as the experimental zone of integrated rural-urban reform in 2008	Pilot hukou reform in Jiulongpo to seek innovative way of integrated rural-urban development
Hukou system	Comprehensive hukou reform in 2010	By 2011, 3 million farmers should be transferred to urban citizens
Land tenure system	Land voucher program in 2008	To improve land efficiency through land "market"
Farmer (migrant)	Migrant workers can transfer to urban citizens while receiving revenue through land voucher program	Migrants are the targeted population of the first phase of hukou reform in 2010
Use of Choice		
State	Public housing project in 2010	Migrants occupy 52% of the total residents
Hukou system	Transfer hukou without giving up land rights; equal public services	Continuously higher urban population rate than national level
Land tenure system	Clarification of land use, transfer rights & capitalize farmers' land through land market	In total, 9,200 ha land has been traded and the total transaction value reaches 28 billion Yuan from 2008 to 2014

Farmer (migrant)	Transfer hukou identity and engage in land voucher transaction	Increase of urban and non-agricultural population by 10% and 11% from 2010 to 2014; 21 billion Yuan of land value goes back to rural collectives as well as individual farmers
Outcome of Choice		
State	Taking control in land requisition, reclamation and conversion while land revenue sharing	Spending on livelihood remains consistent around 40% of the total budget
Hukou system	Merely identity registration system	Annual increase of 500,000-600,000 urban population
Land tenure system	"Quasi" land exchange market	Annual increase of 500,000-600,000 km ² urban built-up area
Farmer (migrant)	Self-determination between rural and urban destinations	By 2011, 3.1 million farmers (migrants) have become urban citizens; land and human urbanization both grow at a compatible rate

Source: Compiled by the author

2.6 Conclusion and policy implications

This chapter addresses one aspect of the question of whether and how China may pass over the middle-income trap to become a high-income country, through economic policy reforms that promote urbanization with a view to wider sharing of prosperity. Then, it goes beyond that question to identify how inclusion and sustainability might be approached in urbanization processes, by focusing on a case study of Chongqing as compared to the wider national context. As previously argued, inclusion and sustainability are considered key factors for China's transformation from land-centered urbanization toward more people-oriented urbanization. Borrowing lessons from international and domestic contexts, characteristics of people-oriented urbanization in China are sketched, focusing on the empowerment of farmer households. The resulting policy framework is first evaluated in comparison with China's historical and current urbanization patterns. It is revealed that adopting a farmer-oriented model has some common ground in China's overall historical experience. Meanwhile, it also becomes apparent that the fundamental difference between the current and proposed alternative urbanization model is the degree of empowerment of farmers and their families during the urbanization process.

Furthermore, this study performs a case study of Chongqing to identify how inclusive development and sustainable growth might be approached in urbanization processes, noting key factors that could support China's transformation from land-centered urbanization to people-oriented urbanization. Chongqing's close relationship with the national government and its pioneer position in advancing China's people-oriented urbanization pilot project makes it the

most appropriate candidate for a case study on comprehensive urbanization reform. Based on the case study of Chongqing, government policies centered on farmers' benefits and rights are shown to create new opportunity structures that expand farmers' agency to make strategic choices between rural and urban integration. The full integration of farmers (migrant workers) into urban life may, in turn, nurture consumption demand and help rebalance the regional economy. Moreover, it can be seen that even though 'empowerment' is not formally presented in Chongqing's state agenda, the concept has been integrated into the institutional logic of its policy design and implementation practices. People who once were structurally subordinated have more viable choices. Notably, the inclusive practice demonstrated in Chongqing is approved and supported by the central government, which means that the people-oriented urbanization model proposed by this study is compatible with China's current socialist regime, and may be considered for application in other jurisdictions with adaptations reflecting local needs and interests.

Due to the available dataset for this chapter, some limitations are present. First, Chongqing's case is unique and cannot be applied directly to other places. Chongqing is the chosen experimental zone for integrated rural-urban development as well as a central municipality that operates under the direct administration of the national government. The great discretion and support from the central government contributes to Chongqing's success in advancing certain inclusive institutional reforms. Moreover, the case study method, which produces context-specific lessons, also limits the general application of Chongqing's model to other regions. Secondly, due to the lack of empirical data on farm families' decisions and associated outcomes, farmers' empowerment is measured indirectly. Thus, the degree of empowerment of farmer households is an approximate measurement that needs to be interpreted accordingly. Thirdly, due to the lack of data on gendered perspectives within the households of those who transfer hukou, female farmers' empowerment status in Chongqing's case cannot be fully investigated.

Considering that this study is a first attempt to propose an empowerment approach to urbanization and market development through the creation of new opportunity structures for farmers, more studies are needed to fill in the research gaps identified above. For example, case studies exploring the feasibility of people-oriented models of urbanization in other cities may clarify the validity of the proposed model. In addition, a study designed to measure directly both

female and male farmers' decisions and actions may provide new insights into the gender dynamics informing the outcomes observed in this case study.

Admittedly, the scope and findings of the case study may be limited; however, the rationale behind Chongqing's policy design and its holistic approach do have significant policy implications for China's future development through people-oriented urbanization. First, the agreement of national and local governments is needed to play a substantial role in advancing related institutional reforms by providing farmers with extended empowerment options, rather than by administrative orders and enforcements. Secondly, the pilot program of land vouchers in Chongqing may not be fully applicable to other regions; however, the idea of enabling farmers to benefit from urbanization while preserving arable land is compatible with current national policy directions. Thirdly, to move toward a more people-oriented model of urbanization, the first step for local governments is to guarantee that new hukou "owners" are treated equally as compared to local citizens, since eliminating any form of discrimination may increase the possibility for people to settle down permanently, and contribute to more lasting regional prosperity. Lastly, this case study demonstrates the value in seeking the matching point of interests between urban development and farmers. As evident in both China's historical urbanization experience and Chongqing's hukou reform, the fulfillment of mutual interests among stakeholders does help guarantee greater consistency and accountability in defining policy practices. Furthermore, it also encourages more farmers to engage in the course of urbanization. Consequently, this matching-of-interest strategy brings inclusive development as well as sustained growth to the local municipal context, with implications for social stability and harmony as well.

If local governments keep moving forward and transforming themselves from self-centered bodies into more farmer-oriented states, China could produce a more people-oriented urbanization process and have a better chance of achieving its ambitions for inclusive growth and sustainable development in the long run. Furthermore, the proposed integrated policy framework, in support of more equitable rural-urban empowerment, may also shed light for other socialist countries in transition wishing to achieve inclusive development and sustained growth, while maintaining the central control of their authoritarian governments. However, as inclusive urbanization means that all people should have equal access to benefits associated with economic development, female farmers, who are further left behind due to the gendered division of labor within households, should be also integrated into the urbanization process so that the proposed

inclusive and sustainable urbanization is complete and not leaving anyone behind, which will improve capacity for prosperity in the nation. The next chapter addresses specifically the issue of left-behind women in relation to urbanization in more detail.

Left-Behind Women and Their Possible Empowerment in Agriculture

This chapter first shows the research gap that characterizes current approaches to left-behind women and their possible empowerment in agriculture, and the reasons behind it. To examine rural women's empowerment status in agriculture, as well as within their households, the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) is applied and informed by a framework for understanding the dynamics of the "migration-left-behind" nexus created by circular migration between rural and urban spaces in China. The next section describes the data collection process, general features of the data, and the empirical methodology. By further decomposing the sub-indexes of WEAI, domains and indicators that can inform policies to increase women's empowerment are also identified. The last section concludes the study and provides implications for current and future research and policy.

3.1 Introduction

Rapid rural-urban migration has had a significant impact on the socioeconomic landscape of rural China, attracting primarily men of all ages out of rural agriculture. In most cases women, the elderly, and children stay behind in the countryside (Biao, 2007; Fan, 2008; Ye & Wu, 2008). The numbers of left-behind women,¹² as the main caretakers of both the elderly and of children, have grown rapidly. In this study, women are considered left-behind if their husbands work in cities and are away from home at least six months in each year (NBS, 2005b). The total population of left-behind women had increased from 13 million in 2000 to 47 million by 2005, representing nearly 28% of the total rural women in China (Yu, Fang, Wang & Wang, 2011). Accompanied by the rising numbers of left-behind women, China has also witnessed the feminization of agriculture (de Brauw, Huang, Zhang & Rozelle, 2013; Yu et al., 2011). This phenomenon has transformed the gendered division of labor in agriculture to one where left-behind and other rural women engage in farm work to a much greater degree than in the past, thereby producing an economically structured gender divide (Short, Chen, Entwisle & Zhai, 2002).

¹² In this study, non-left-behind women are referred to as rural women who live with their husbands in rural areas three days per week for at least six months. To analyze the impact of the household structure on women's autonomy, only married women are included in this study.

Women's increasing engagement in agriculture does not necessarily mean that left-behind women's capacity for management and decision-making has increased proportionately (de Brauw, Li, Liu & Rozelle & Zhang, 2008). On the contrary, many scholars argue that agricultural feminization has deepened the disadvantaged position of rural women by trapping them in labor-intensive agriculture (Fan, 2003). It is also widely recognized that rural women, including those left-behind, still face persistent discrimination and obstacles resulting in lower literacy levels, family positions, and wages than men (Fan, 2003, 2004; Huang & Li, 2008). Although these arguments do reflect current conditions, they also treat women as passive decision-makers in migration and the feminization of agriculture, while ignoring women's possible efforts to help guide and support their families in this shifting situation. Increasing international studies have shown that left-behind women are proactive actors in their lives, making and contributing to family decisions, with positive impacts on the well-being of their households, as well as on agricultural outcomes (Archambault, 2012; Jacka, 2014; McEvoy, Petrzeka, Radel & Schmook, 2012).

Leaving some family members behind during urbanization process may be part of a calculated decision undertaken by all household members wishing to improve the economic well-being of the whole family. This geographically structured division of labor among family members has also been explained by economic development theorists as evidence of the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) (Stark & Bloom, 1985; Stark, 1991; Taylor, 1999). NELM theory's focus on decision-making within the household implies that leaving someone behind is the rational choice for households attempting to diversify risks and to absorb unexpected economic and environmental shocks (Stark & Bloom, 1985). However, there is no discounting of women's agency in the left behind strategies implied by NELM theory.

Women's increasing participation in agricultural sectors may afford them an opportunity to achieve some degree of economic autonomy. Integrating both the managerial role and the participation rate of women into measures of agricultural feminization, de Brauw et al. (2013) concluded that China's rural women gained some autonomy and decision-making power as a result of their increasing engagement in agriculture. However, they remain cautious about women's involvement in managerial decisions. Since they use women-headed households to approximate women's managerial roles, their results may be downward-biased, excluding women who play a key role in operating agriculture, but are not the heads of their households.

Studies have shown that being left behind has provided women with empowerment opportunities in many developing countries (Archambault, 2010; McEvoy et al., 2012; Wouterse, 2016). Drawing on Friedmann's (1992) comprehensive outline of the principles informing people-oriented alternative development, gender equity and women's empowerment are recognized here as important considerations in the Chinese context. Thus, providing a direct focus on women's agency reveals that some left-behind women may be empowered during periods of separation from their migrant husbands. In this study, empowerment is defined as "expanding people's ability to make strategic life choices, particularly in contexts in which this ability had been denied to them" (Kabeer, 2001).

However, very limited research directly focuses on linking rural Chinese women with empowerment. Even fewer studies address left-behind women and their potential empowerment in agriculture (Biao, 2007; Jacka, 2014). Furthermore, due to the multidimensional and context-specific nature of empowerment, existing methodologies for addressing women's empowerment in rural China are limited either to qualitative methods or indirect measurements (Jacka & Sargeson, 2011; Judd, 2010; Song & Vernooy, 2010). The context-specific nature of case studies and the lack of systematic measurement of empowerment further limit the emergence of relevant research on the empowerment profiles of China's left-behind women. Thus, research questions to be addressed in this study are: How might being left behind serve as a source of empowerment for Chinese women, if they can take advantage of new opportunities, thereby obtaining greater access to decision-making and income in agriculture than before? What quantifiable evidence might be gathered to clarify whether left-behind women are more empowered in agriculture than non-left-behind women in rural China, relative to their male partners?

Answering these questions requires a verifiable method to measure the relative empowerment, agency, and socio-economic inclusion of left-behind women in the agricultural sector, in order to understand policy and practice implications that would support more inclusive urbanization. However, very few systematic measures were available to examine these factors until the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) introduction of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). The WEAI is concerned with women's empowerment in food security and agricultural growth, and measures their involvement in decisions about agricultural production and use of productive resources – including time use, control over income use, and involvement in community leadership, as compared to men in their

households. This study offers the first attempt to apply the WEAI in the context of China. In order to produce meaningful results, it is necessary to modify the original WEAI modules and methods slightly to reflect the Chinese context while still replicating the WEAI protocol.

For the purposes of this pilot study, extensive fieldwork has been conducted in three provinces in Northeastern China to collect first-hand data, from which the WEAI scores for both left-behind and non-left-behind women have been calculated. Then, a reasonable between-group comparison has been undertaken. The assumption is that if being left behind leads to women's measurable empowerment, this could be observed through higher values of WEAI for left-behind than non-left-behind women, holding other factors constant. The results show that left-behind women in the sample are more empowered than non-left-behind women, as measured by the WEAI. This finding is consistent with the experiences of left-behind women in some other developing countries, such as Mexico, India, and Africa (Archambault, 2010; McEvoy et al., 2012; Radel, Schmook, McEvoy, MÉNdez & Petrzalka, 2012).

After disaggregating the WEAI results by domains and indicators, key fields that contribute to, or inhibit, women's (dis) empowerment¹³ can be identified as sites for possible future development policies and social programs that could improve left-behind as well as non-left-behind women's empowerment in agriculture. Given a context in which it has been common to see left-behind women as disempowered, it is important that women and men recognize their agency and strategic roles in challenging conditions. Therefore, the present study fills an existing research gap in addressing China's left-behind women's possible self-recognition as agents, through their potentials for being empowered in agriculture. It provides evidence regarding women's strategic role in migration decisions and agricultural production in order to shed light on China's on-going and possible future approaches to addressing prevailing gender inequalities through agricultural modernization.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a selective literature review of international and China's left-behind women and their roles in agriculture, through which a framework for understanding the dynamics of "migration-left-behind" is built. Section 3 describes the data collection process, general features of the data, and the empirical methodology, which outlines procedures used to conduct the comparison between left-behind and

¹³ In an effort to develop informed perspectives on factors contributing to both empowerment and disempowerment, the two terms are used carefully to facilitate the calculation of WEAI and to produce policy implications.

non-left-behind women. Section 4 presents the results of the WEAI measurement and its sub-indexes, and provides a discussion based on the results. Section 5 concludes the study and provides implications for current and future research and policy programs.

3.2 Literature review and the “migration-left-behind” nexus

This section first reviews the international literature on the relationship between labor migration and left-behind women, in terms of women’s roles during the feminization of agriculture. After describing the limitations of existing approaches to investigating women’s managerial roles in agriculture, it introduces empowerment indexing as an alternative methodology to fill the research gap. Then, the section presents the meaning, development, and issues informing women’s empowerment, moving toward, in particular, the challenges and latest innovations in measuring women’s empowerment in agriculture. After reviewing and describing the research gap between international practices and research on China’s left-behind women’s empowerment, this study develops a “migration-left-behind” framework to examine left-behind women’s empowerment status in agriculture as well as within their households.

3.2.1 Labor migration, left-behind women and the feminization of agriculture

For the last several decades, most developing countries have been experiencing massive rural-urban migration (Cai, 2001). This phenomenon has been examined and theorized by a wide range of scholars and integrates a broad spectrum of disciplines (Lewis, 1954; Harris & Todaro, 1970). The targeted research areas and methods support analysis that can be divided into two broad levels of theorizing: macro and micro. Macro-level theories focus on aggregate trends in migration flows using more abstract explanations of evolving socio-economic phenomena arising from globalization and development, whereas micro-level theories investigate the individual and local levels of migration decision-making, as impacted by wider socioeconomic structures. Neoclassic development economics theories reveal the macro-level relationships between labor migration and economic growth, claiming that internal migration occurs as a result of income differences between the traditional rural agricultural sector and the urban industrial sector (Lewis, 1954; Ranis & Fei, 1961; Harris & Todaro, 1970). Some scholars go further to investigate the determinants and effects of labor migration in relation to uneven regional development, exploring the issues from different disciplines, such as social network, human capital, and costs/benefits theories (Boyd, 1989; Schultz, 1961; Sjaastad, 1962).

By focusing on decisions made by individual members of households, New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory goes beyond the micro-level of analysis to bridge understandings about conditioned choices at the meso-level of migratory planning, as influenced by macro-level economic factors (Stark & Bloom, 1985; Taylor, 1999). In other words, micro-level decisions may be deemed necessary to bridge and accommodate macro-level disparities. In this way, rural-urban migration patterns can be considered the outcome of what is often a split-household strategy designed to diversify income sources and reduce risks (Stark, 1991). NELM explains the general mechanism of division of labor within rural families, whereby migrants travel to work where local markets function well, while leaving other family members behind. However, it does not go further to examine who are left behind based on the gendered division of labor within households.

Notably, the division of labor is not always based on economic necessity; it also depends on social class, culture, and ideology within a society or household (Boserup, 1970; Polanyi, 1957). Due to the vast gender inequities and prevailing male dominance in the social ideologies of most developing countries, gendered divisions of labor tend to produce gendered migration patterns. More specifically, men are more likely to engage in out-migration to urban areas, while leaving the women, children and elderly behind (Jacka, 2014). Accompanied by the increasing labor migration of men, the feminization of agriculture has emerged as a measurable effect across most developing countries (Singh & Meenakshi, 2004).

On the one hand, gendered agricultural phenomena are generally considered to have negative impacts on women's well-being and gender relations (Garikipati 2008; Sachs & Alston, 2010), which in turn threatens total agricultural efficiency (Ganguly & Swapan, 2003; Deere, 2005). On the other hand, there have been growing studies in many countries claiming that feminization of agriculture may have some potential to improve the relative positions of women (de Brauw et al., 2008, 2013). This strand of literature suggests that male out-migration leaves many women as de facto heads of households, with increased responsibilities for both overseeing and maintaining subsistence agricultural production for the family (Katz, 2003; Deere, 2005). Some studies go further to examine women's participation rates as well as their managerial roles in the feminization of agriculture (de Brauw et al., 2008). However, due to the difficulty of accurately measuring women's roles in decision-making, very limited analysis that focuses on the managerial side of agricultural feminization exists in the literature (Radel et al., 2012).

Furthermore, women's roles in migration planning have long been viewed as associational and, therefore, passive in relation to decisions made by males (Jacka, 2014). This image of women results from assumed biased gender relations, producing an expectation of continued normative patriarchal gender practices. Consequently, most studies of migration and agricultural feminization focus on or assume that male out-migration has profound negative structural consequences for left-behind women, resulting in their further inferior positions to men (Deere, 2005; Dolan & Sorby, 2003). Thus, despite the renewed interest in the agricultural sector as an engine of growth and development, and greater recognition of the importance of women in agriculture, women's power positions relative to men and the impact of managerial feminization on agricultural production remain underexplored. A different methodology that directly investigates women's experiences of gender relations is needed.

3.2.2 Women's empowerment: meaning, trend and issues

In contrast to the limited research on managerial feminization of agriculture resulting from men's migration, increasing studies have been conducted to investigate women's empowerment and its impacts on development outcomes (Rowlands, 1998; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2012). Women's self-recognition of agency in their gender relations with men in household and community decision-making is vital to their empowerment and can be integrated into an examination of women's decisional roles in agriculture (Kabeer, 1999; Torri & Martinez, 2014).

Since the 1970s, the term 'empowerment' has been widely used in global economic and political discourse by organizations, feminist groups, as well as intergovernmental institutions such as the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO) (Rowlands, 1998). The term 'empowerment' implies a transfer or acquisition of substantive power to influence and change the conditions of one's life. In this sense, empowerment is generally conceptualized as originating from four different kinds of power relationships, comprised of 'power over', 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within' (Hartsock, 1985; Rowlands, 1998). The predominant meaning of power in governance is 'power over' or control of others (Dahl, 1961; Wolfinger, 1971). Unlike 'power over,' which often focuses on the results of power transfer, other forms of power address the processes of the change; 'power to' involves capacity and relative decision-making power; 'power with' refers to collective power; and 'power from within' identifies intrapersonal power (Rowlands, 1998, p. 12-14). According to Rowlands

(1998), excepting 'power over,' these empowerment models benefited not only the vulnerable and marginalized people but produced a net profit to the collective civic or national economy.

By documenting thirty-two different definitions of empowerment that are currently in use, Ibriham and Alkire (2007) found that the majority of studies defined empowerment in terms of individual agency, with or without attention to structural conditions. Agency refers to "what a person is free to do and achieves in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important" (Sen, 1985, p. 206). According to Sen (1992), agency constituted 'process freedom' in the interplay of individual agency and social situations. An agent is "someone who acts and brings about change" (Sen, 1999, p. 19). The other key concept in Sen's (1992) capacity framework was the agent's situated capability, which could be termed as 'opportunity freedom.' Kabeer (2001) defined empowerment as 'expanding people's ability to make strategic life choices, particularly in contexts in which this ability had been denied to them.' Other than focusing on the individual's freedom to act, some scholars define empowerment by emphasizing the preconditions required to expand individual and collective agency (Ibriham & Alkire, 2007). Narayan (2002) defined empowerment as "the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives" (p. 5). Alsop et al. (2006) identified individual agency and socio-political opportunity structures as the two most important components of empowerment. Agency is closely related to the agent's capability to select from among choices available under the existing opportunity structures or to propose changes to them. To exert agency, members of subordinate groups must often overcome significant institutional and informal obstacles. As well, rules that were made to benefit elite groups and adopted by the wider public have to be transformed to benefit subordinated groups (Alsop et al., 2006). Often, this transformation requires greater understanding of the shared benefits that accrue to all in the context of mutual actualization, an issue that is becoming increasingly visible in relation to the need for women's empowerment in the pursuit of both inclusion and prosperity.

With a growing awareness of women's issues, development planners in the 1970s began to try to better integrate women into their projects, by linking notions of empowerment with women's more formal engagement in economic production (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005). The Women in Development (WID) framework was initiated to bring women into development planning and enable them to participate more fully and equitably in the socio-economic fields of

their societies. However, from the WID perspective, women were merely considered as instruments to enhance economic growth. Thus, very little progress has been made to improve gender relations under the WID framework, since its establishment. In the late 1970s and 1980s, a Gender and Development (GAD) approach was pursued to tackle gender inequality in development (Taylor, 1999). With the GAD perspective, the power relations and institutions within societies that structure women's subordination to men have been made more visible (Rowlands, 1995).

The 'empowerment of women' has emerged and become the theme of the GAD discourse for the last two decades. Feminists and activists from Third World¹⁴ countries have contributed significantly to the theory and practices of women's empowerment (Sen & Grown, 1988; Taylor, 1999). Women's empowerment was first proposed as an international strategy in the 1980s by a group of feminist activists from the South¹⁵ to challenge the domination of the Northern feminists in international discourses on women. At the 1995 World Conference on Women held in Beijing, women's empowerment was recognized as a significant factor in the agenda of human development worldwide. In 2000, "gender equality and women's empowerment" were established as the third goal of Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000).

Admittedly, promoting women's empowerment may have positive effects on disempowered women. However, empowerment does not always lead to positive changes. The Gender and Development (GAD) literature has recognized that women could become disempowered as a result of development initiatives, where male-biased institutions and capitalist strategies have worsened women's status relative to men (Kabeer, 1994). Furthermore, even though the process of empowerment is assumed to lead to better outcomes, there is no "straightforward cause and effect relationship between process and outcomes. Nor is it always clear when a change is cause and when effect, when process, and when outcome" (Kabeer, 2001, p. 81). In this sense, when investigating the impact of changing socio-economic and political processes on women's empowerment, it is important to recognize the complexity of their situated agency, as well as that of the systems with which they interact. Furthermore, it is also critical to take socio-cultural and local contexts into account and consider the direct or indirect effects of

13 Chandra Mohanty (2003) argues that the so-called Third World comprises two thirds of the world, and therefore represents the majority perspective, even though a one-third minority holds dominant economic power.

¹⁵ After the Cold War, the North-South divide is broadly considered a socio-economic and political divide. The North includes North America, Western Europe and developed countries in Asia, while the South contains Africa, Latin America, and developing parts of Asia including parts of the Middle East.

these factors on changing power relations (Syed, 2008). In such dynamic and contradictory contexts, developing evidence-based recommendations for policy development is critical.

3.2.3 Women's empowerment in agriculture and its measurement

Gender is, of course, not the only axis along which empowerment or disempowerment occurs. Disempowerment may be a function of social constructions of age, class, ethnicity, religion and many other factors. These factors, as well as the intersections among them, must also be taken into account. However, women's disempowerment has an intergenerational impact on gender inequities, which could trap the next generations of poor women in poverty (Samman & Santos, 2009). In this sense, more attention and efforts are needed to promote empowerment and capacity-building among poor and oppressed women, who are more likely trapped in declining agricultural sectors.

In low-income countries where agriculture is the dominant sector, women make up a substantial majority of the agricultural workforce in rural areas (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], International Fund for Agriculture Development [IFAD] & World Bank, 2008). Agriculture is not only a critical source of livelihood for women, but it is also considered a key way to help women out of poverty (FAO, 2011). The decreasing contribution of agriculture to national economies has taken its toll on the availability of sustainable employment in agriculture, particularly for small and marginal producers. Among them, women are the most vulnerable, as they do not normally have control over either productive resources or any kinds of assets (Jiju, 2013). While women's empowerment and gender equity have been improved substantially in general, the majority of rural women in developing countries are still in disadvantaged positions and living in poverty to a greater extent than men (Hu, 2009; Malapit, Sraboni, Quisumbing & Ahmed, 2015).

There has been growing recognition that empowering women and reducing gender inequity in agriculture has the potential to significantly improve agricultural productivity, and ensure national food security (World Bank, 2011; FAO, 2011). Closing the gender gap in property ownership by allowing women to own and control productive assets increases both their productivity and their self-esteem (Duflo & Udry, 2004). A woman who is empowered to make decisions regarding what to plant and what inputs to apply on her plot will be more motivated and productive in agriculture (Alkire et al, 2012). An empowered woman will have a positive impact on children's health and nutrition, partly because she can take better care of her own

physical and mental well-being (Malapit, Kadiyala, Quisumbing, Cunningham & Tyagi, 2013; Sraboni, Malapit, Quisumbing & Ahmed, 2014). Furthermore, women's empowerment in agriculture may have spillover effects on women's power in other fields (Datta & Kornberg, 2002; Alkire et al, 2013), and vice versa.

According to FAO, IFAD, and the World Bank (2008), there were less than 10 percent of agricultural development assistance programs consider gender issues as their targets. Most literature on practices of women's empowerment focus either on one specific field of agriculture or indirect measures related to agriculture (Malhotra, Schuler & Boender, 2002). For example, the common methods that are currently used to empower rural women are evaluated through micro-credit programs, entitlement to land rights, enhancing women's control over productive assets, and integrating them into decision-making in agriculture. Most Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have limited resources and time to invest in promoting empowerment (Dawson, 1998), and the benefits from investment in agriculture are low and take longer than for other programs. As a result, the lack of comprehensive measures for women's empowerment in agriculture limits the development of policies designed to provide targeted opportunity structures.

Accurately representing women's empowerment requires careful measurements, though few systematic measures are available (Malhotra et al., 2002). The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) may offer one way to produce high quality measures of women's empowerment in rural settings. The index was initially developed as a tool to measure women's empowerment that might result from the US government's "Feed the Future Initiative." In 2011, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) authorized the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHDI) to design an aggregate index to monitor women's meaningful inclusion in the agricultural sector, which later was developed as the WEAI (Alkire et al., 2012).

Before WEAI, women's empowerment and gender inequality were typically measured at the aggregate country level, which does not allow for heterogeneities in local, regional, national and international contexts. For example, the Gender Gap Index (GGI) proposed by Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi (2011), although covering gender inequalities in a broader set of domains, was still based on aggregate indicators. Nationally representative surveys such as the China Household Income Projects (CHIPS) and the China National Rural Survey (CNHS) include a range of questions, offering a direct measure of decision-making within the household. However,

the domains in which decision-making are measured are typically confined to the household sphere (Alkire et al., 2012). Thus, each of these measures of empowerment is limited in several ways, as compared to WEAI.

The WEAI builds on research that proposes domain-specific measures of empowerment through individual or household-level surveys (Alkire & Foster, 2011a, b). As an aggregate index, the WEAI includes two sub-indexes. The first is used to measure the extent to which women are empowered based on five domains of empowerment (5DE). The five domains are (1) decisions about agricultural production, (2) access to and decision-making power about productive resources, (3) control and use of income, (4) leadership in the community, and (5) time allocation. The second sub-index is the Gender Parity Index (GPI), which measures gender parity within the household.

The WEAI index has been tested in Bangladesh, Uganda and Guatemala and has proven that it can generally assess aspects of empowerment that relate directly to agriculture, identify key domains where empowerment needs to be stressed, and track progress over time (Alkire et al., 2012). While the WEAI provides a rigorous measure of women's empowerment relevant to agriculture, it is subject to some limitations (Malapit et al., 2014):

- WEAI may be upward-biased if female respondents in the WEAI survey are already decision makers.
- Due to the fact that the specific focus of WEAI is agriculture, women's empowerment in other fields may be overlooked. More specifically, women who are not involved in agricultural decisions may appear disempowered even if they are engaged in decision-making about non-agricultural activities. Similarly, women involved in agricultural decisions may appear empowered, when their decision-making capacity relative to women involved in non-agricultural activities remains low.
- The WEAI may have upward biased results for single female households. This is because women in households that do not have a male decision-maker are more likely to be identified as principle decision makers.

3.2.4 China's left-behind women and their empowerment in agriculture

In China, the increasing rural-urban migration has led to an enormous population, including women, the elderly and children, being left behind in rural areas, due at least in part to the hukou system. However, the problems faced by this left-behind group were rarely accorded

attention by policymakers or scholars, either inside or outside China, until the twenty-first century (Hu, 2012). This change may be partly due to China's policy and discourse shifting from an economic development focus toward achieving a harmonious and inclusive society in order to reduce increasing social tensions (Jacka, 2014), thereby increasing more widely-shared prosperity in future. Since then a new scholarly literature on the suffering and lack of social welfare endured by the left-behind population has emerged.

Among the left-behind population in China, women are seen to bear the brunt of burdens arising from men's out-migration process, since they are most likely to carry on most of the agricultural production, domestic work, and caretaking for the elderly and children (Bossen, 1994; Fan, 2004; Jacka, 2012). Generally, left-behind women are married and stay behind in the village when their husbands' out-migration takes place. More precisely, for the purposes of this chapter, left-behind women are defined as rural women whose husbands work temporarily outside the home villages for at least six months during the year (NBS, 2010). Thus, for most women, being left behind may be not their own decisions, but undertaken to take care of the family as a way of supporting their husbands' migration (Luo & Chai, 2004). Furthermore, studies also show that the geographically-structured gendered division of labor is based on unequal gender relations and patriarchal ideology deeply embedded within the society (Jacka, 1997; Toyota, Yeoh & Nguyen, 2007).

Chinese scholars have depicted left-behind women in a more negative and vulnerable position, in which they bear a heavy burden for agricultural production with strong mental pressures, while living a life with multiple risks for their marriages as well (Huang & Li, 2008; Jacka, 2014). Increasingly, left-behind women are portrayed in academic and policy discourses as a vulnerable group of passive decision-takers, abandoned by their families. This negative conceptualization of left-behind women, their welfare, health, and roles in agriculture means that their positions have been recognized and considered accordingly. For example, Mu and van de Walle (2011) found that male migration has little impact on left-behind women's health conditions, but it does have negative effects on women's well-being, overall.

Left-behind women are considered to be secondary in family decision-making (Zheng & Xie, 2004; Sun, 2006) and are under the double burdens of production work and housework, as well as double dependencies on men for economic and emotional support (Jiang & Zhou 2007). Generally, left-behind women are seen to have lower educational levels than their male partners,

which limit their self-esteem and opportunities (Hu, 2009). Furthermore, the gendered division of labor also leads to much more gender segregation, where left-behind women participate in agriculture to a much greater degree than before (Jacka, 1997; Short et al., 2002). However, left-behind women's increasing participation in agriculture does not mean they have gained more autonomy. It is more accurate to talk about the 'agriculturalization of females' rather than the 'feminization of agriculture,' since women are pushed into getting more involved in the increasingly marginalized agricultural sector by multiple structural factors (Fei, 1998; Gao, 1994).

While most of the literature focuses on negative outcomes for left-behind women, there have also been attempts to address their positive potentials, under uneven economic development structures (Biao, 2007). Recognizing that women are pro-active agents in their own lives may provide more insights into this current in the literature. Negative conceptualizations of left-behind women have the potential to undermine their self-recognition as agents, which may reinforce their vulnerable positions (Jacka, 2014). By focusing on older women's agency, Jacka (2014) found that older women engaged actively in family affairs and made significant contributions. Meng (1993) argued that the absence of men provided women with the opportunities to play significant roles in matters that were not available to them. Li (2003) further confirmed that the managerial opportunities available for women in family matters were the by-products of the out-migration of their husbands.

To measure comprehensively the degree of women's increasing participation in agriculture, de Brauw et al. (2008) developed a conceptual framework comprising two types of feminization of agriculture: labor feminization and managerial feminization. Labor feminization happens when women have increasingly high participation rates in agricultural production, while managerial feminization measures women's increasing power in decision-making and greater access to the use of income (de Brauw et al., 2008). Relative to the feminization of labor, managerial feminization is much more difficult to measure. Due to a lack of available data, they use female-headed households as a proxy measure of women's participation in decision-making. They also do not consider the supervision of others' labor, either from within the household or of hired workers, as a critical facet of farm management. Due to the imperfect measurement of management feminization, de Brauw et al. (2008) conditionally concluded that managerial feminization did not emerge, while labor feminization had occurred, definitively. In their most recent study, de Brauw et al. (2013) stated that agricultural feminization had clearly emerged in

rural China, but they were still very cautious about drawing conclusions on managerial feminization.

Rather than approximate managerial feminization, focusing on women's empowerment in agricultural decision-making may shed new light on left-behind women's adaptive experience during family shocks, such as separations arising from economically motivated migration patterns. Even though there is growing interest in women's empowerment in agriculture, internationally and domestically, few studies have been done specifically to address China's left-behind women's empowerment in agriculture, due to long-existing patriarchal institutional biases and measurement challenges (Zuo, 2004). Song and Vernooy (2010) were among the first to claim that rural women's self-organization and autonomous capabilities were important to empowering participants in the mainstreaming process. Based on mostly qualitative data, Jacka (2014) argued that older left-behind women could extend their agency by fulfilling their domestic responsibilities within families. Hu (2009) urged that it was necessary to take advantage of the new opportunities brought by globalization to hasten the progress of empowering Chinese rural women. Among these studies, most are based on either qualitative methods or indirect measurements of women's empowerment. The lack of systematic methods that can directly measure empowerment further constrains the growth and generalization of this strand of research, leaving left-behind women's experiences of extended separation from their husbands unanswered.

3.2.5 Theoretical framework of the “migration-left-behind” nexus

As presented in the literature review, the expansive literature on migration is primarily focused on its impacts on national development as well as possible aggregate effects on households; however, comparatively, much of the dominant literature generally neglects the experience of the left-behind population. The most influential migration literature that links migration and the left behind is the New Economic of Labor Migration (NELM) or so-called Household Strategy Theory (Stark & Bloom, 1985). However, literature in this strand attempts to reveal the intra-household decision-making mechanisms prior to or during the migration (e.g. Stark, 1991; Taylor, 1999), which means it is unable to explain the consequences of migration and its impact on the left behind. Even when studies have specifically addressed the problems facing the left behind population, they mainly focus on the economic welfare, health and well-being of the left-behind, while overlooking the adaptive experience of the left-behind in coping with issues arising in the wake of any absent household members (Nguyen, Brenda & Toyota,

2007; Toyota, Yeoh & Nguyen, 2007). Taking into full account the dynamic interplay between migration and the left behind, Toyota, Yeoh and Nguyen (2007) proposed a framework engaging the ‘migration–left-behind nexus’ to guide migration studies, thus obtaining new insights into the stretched relationships that characterize migration and their effects on broader social change.

While Toyota, Yeoh and Nguyen’s (2007) ‘migration-left-behind’ framework provides an integrated way of researching migration by bringing the left-behind to the center stage of migration studies, it neglects the gendered division of labor within the household. However, increasing research on left-behind women has shown that women are most likely to be left behind and become the main caretakers of both the elderly and of children (Jacka, 1997; 2014). Thus, by focusing on the relationship between left-behind women and their male partners, the ‘migration-left-behind nexus’ can shed more light on women’s adaptive experiences, as well as changes in gender relations during periods of temporary migration.

This is especially true in the context of China. Due partly to the combination of hukou and land tenure systems, discussed in depth in the previous chapter, China’s labor migration is primarily characterized by men wandering between rural and urban areas, for work. This practice makes women after marriage more likely to stay behind to take care of their families and agricultural businesses. Constrained by the traditional values and patriarchal cultural norms embedded in the society, Chinese left-behind women are normally depicted as a group of passive decision-takers within their households and communities, even when this may not always be the case. This paper challenges this predominant assumption of rural female passivity by shifting the focus from left-behind women’s vulnerability to their agency, and by considering the extent to which they may be empowered to gain a degree of economic autonomy and social well-being. For the purpose of this study, the ‘migration-left-behind nexus’ refers to the interplay between migrant husbands and left-behind wives specifically in agricultural households.

As defined earlier, left-behind women are normally married women, whose husbands engage in rural-urban migration for more than half of the year (NBS, 2005b). This implies that left-behind women and male migrants are paired through marriage at the household level. In this sense, labor migration and staying behind could also be considered a macro manifestation of the outcome of a gendered division of labor within the family. Hence, to capture how left-behind women experience and adapt to the absence of their husbands and vice versa, the perspective of their migrant husbands is also integrated into the analysis. As Kabeer (2001) argued, men did not

only play important roles in causing women's disempowerment, but could also have the lifting effects of increasing women's empowerment. Thanks to WEAI, which requires interviewing both women and their husbands separately, this study is able to investigate women's empowerment and to compare and integrate the gendered perspectives of both men and women, separately and together, for the analysis.

Guided by the "migration-left-behind" nexus, left-behind women's agency, empowerment and gender relations within the household are carefully examined from the perspective of both left-behind women and their male partners, in order to document net household shift toward a greater recognition of female agency.

3.3 Data and empirical methodology

This section first provides an explanation of the rationale for data collection methods and a thorough description of data attributes at both household and individual levels. Then, it presents the methodology of calculating 5DE, GPI, and WEAI, followed by a general introduction to the matching method used before the comparison between left-behind and non-left-behind households.

3.3.1 Description of data

The WEAI survey was conducted in the Northeastern region of China, including Jilin, Liaoning and Heilongjiang provinces, in February 2015. The primary reason for choosing this region is because the data used to build the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) has to be collected at either a national or regional level (Alkire et al, 2013). Due to limited resources and budget, this study focuses on building a regional WEAI in the three provinces comprising China's Northeast region. The Northeast area is China's key agricultural zone with a relatively large rural population engaging in the agricultural sector, which makes the region very suitable for the purposes of the study. In 2011, Jilin had the highest proportion of rural population at 46.6% while holding the least total population of 27.5 million among the three provinces (NBS, 2012). In the same year, Heilongjiang had the second highest rural population ratio at 43.5% with a total population of 38.5 million, while Liaoning has a total population at 43.8 million, and the lowest rural population ratio of 36.0% (NBS, 2012).

Fieldwork was conducted during China's Spring Festival season, for several reasons. First, as required by the WEAI survey procedure, the primary male and female members of households

should be interviewed separately and simultaneously, to better capture their independent opinions on questions at the time of the interviews (Alkire et al, 2012). Since migrant workers are most likely to return home during either the harvest or the Spring Festival seasons (Fan, 2003), planning for this study takes that temporal structure into account. Secondly, the choice of the winter holidays was made to facilitate the sampling and data collection processes. As Wu & Ye (2016) noted, it is difficult to select randomly and differentiate left-behind from non-left-behind households, due to the lack of relevant official statistics in survey areas. Rather than conducting pilot interviews in each village to obtain information on household types (Wu & Ye, 2016), this study recruited university students from Northeastern rural regions, to conduct surveys in their home villages. After being trained, student enumerators were able to pre-select and to interview left-behind and non-left-behind households in their villages.

Consequently, however, the sampling procedure may produce selection bias. Since sampled households are not randomly chosen from the region, their selection is tightly linked with the community-based knowledge of student enumerators. Furthermore, students may have chosen households based on their connections and social networks, which may result in biased sample selection at the village level. However, this method does not necessarily lead to biased outcomes at the regional scale when pooling all households together. Even though the sample selection process is not perfectly random, it could be considered as approximately random by first pooling all sampled villages across the three provinces. Secondly, the sampled villages are relatively independent from each other, since the recruitment of students is mainly based on provincial factors rather than place-specific considerations. As shown in Figure 3.1, the sampled villages are distributed broadly, thus approximately representing the Northeastern region.

In total, 25 students with diverse majors ranging from geography to sociology were recruited from six local universities in Jilin province. Consequently, 200 left-behind and non-left-behind households were selected from 25 villages across the Northeastern region for analysis. More specifically, 94, 55 and 51 households were selected from Jilin, Heilongjiang, and Liaoning provinces, respectively. Since the WEAI only measures activities related to agriculture, rural women who engage in wage employment and non-agricultural sectors were dropped from the sample, even though these other forms of employment may contribute to their empowerment. Finally, 151 out of 200 fully completed WEAI-eligible questionnaires were selected from 21 villages, comprising 58 left-behind and 93 non-left-behind households, respectively.

Figure 3.1 Distribution of villages across provinces

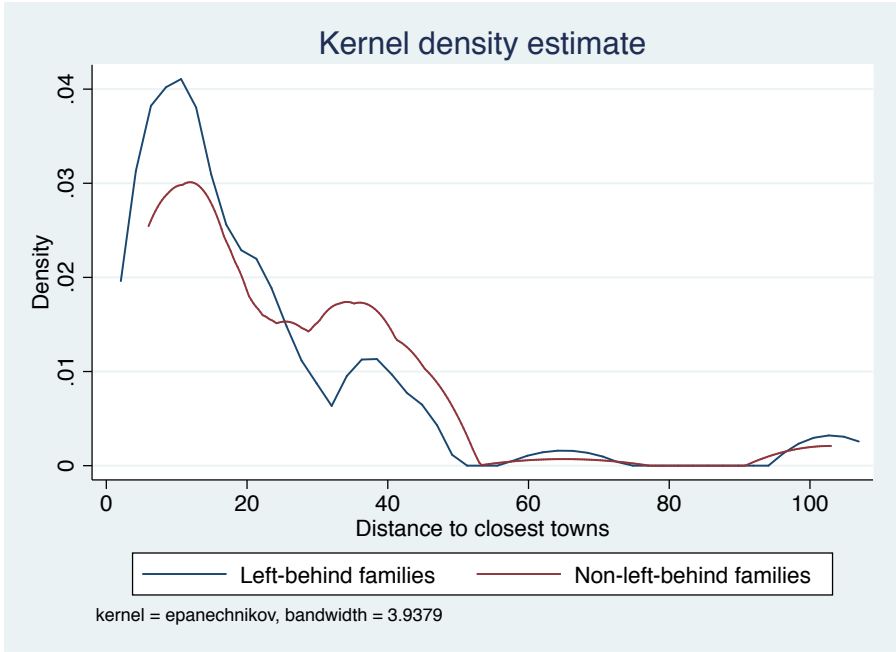


Source: Each “*” represents a sampled village from the study

At the village level, the distances between specific villages and nearby low-tier towns and high-tier cities were measured as external factors. As shown in Figure 3.2, the distances to nearest towns between the two types of households are not perfectly coincident. More specifically, the peak value of distance to towns for left-behind households is much greater than the non-left-behind households. However, the share of non-left-behind families is greater than left-behind households when the distance is between 30 to 50 kilometers and the share of both families coincides to a much higher level when the distance is greater than 50 kilometers.

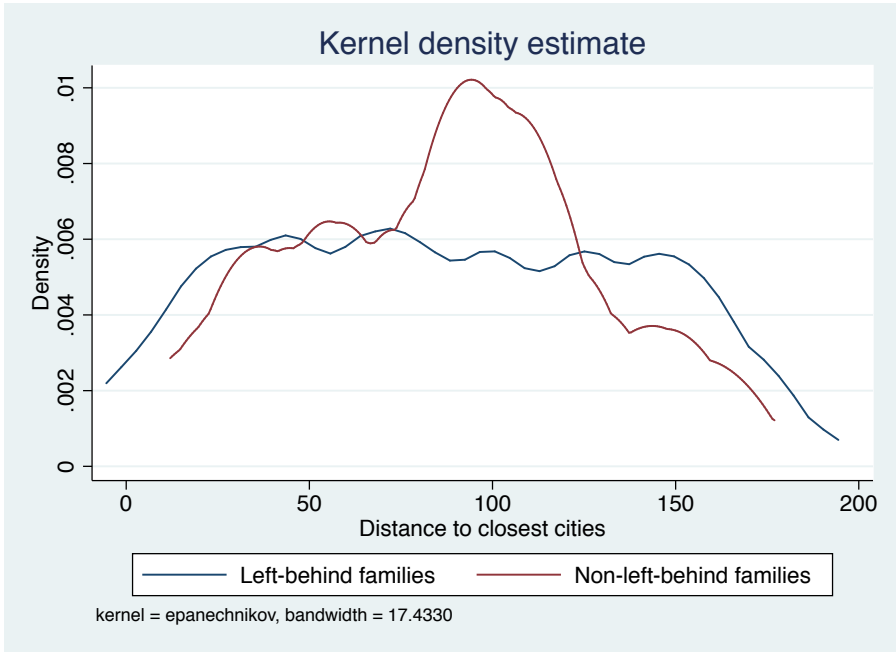
The distances to the nearest towns between the two types of households could be considered approximately coincident. Consequently, this pattern demonstrates that left-behind and non-left-behind households may face similar driving forces, such as commuting time and distance to local labor markets, in terms of working temporarily in nearby towns. However, other factors, such as education, employment opportunities and social networks, may contribute to different decisions among women and men from both groups on whether family members may benefit from working in high-tier cities or not. As shown in Figure 3.3, the two curves of distance to high-tier cities between the two groups are not coincident.

Figure 3.2 Distribution of the distance between villages and low-tier towns



Source: derived from the sample

Figure 3.3 Distribution of the distance between villages and high-tier cities



Source: derived from the sample

In each village, data were collected at both household and individual levels. All men and women in the sample were paired within their respective households as husbands and wives. As shown in Table 3.1, at the household level, left-behind couples have slightly bigger family sizes than non-left-behind couples, with an average value of 3.5 and 3.3 individuals, respectively. Left-behind households also possess more farmland than their counterparts, with an average of 4.7 and 3.9 land tracts, respectively. Notably, the left-behind households in the sample have lower average educational levels than non-left-behind households, with 1.8 and 2.0 out of a total 6 levels, respectively. This education gap means non-left-behind households are more likely to finish junior high school education than left-behind families (level 2 represents completion of middle school education). Despite the low educational attainment of left-behind households, on average, they have earned approximately 15,141 Yuan for the last six months, which is higher than for the non-left-behind families, with an average earning of 13,479 Yuan for the same period. Furthermore, left-behind families are slightly younger than non-left-behind ones, when summing up the average age of both husbands and wives, with an average age of 45.3 and 46 years, respectively.

Table 3.1 Data description at household and individual level

Characteristics	Left-behind Household		Non-left-behind Household	
	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
<i>Household Level</i>				
Family Size	3.5	1.1	3.3	0.9
Education*	1.8	0.9	2.0	1.1
Farmland	4.7	5.1	3.9	5.9
Total Income	15141	14911	13478	16325
Age	45.3	6.6	46.0	6.2
Characteristics	Women		Men	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>Individual Level</i>				
Age	44.8	6.7	45.8	6.5
Education	1.7	1.1	1.8	0.9
Subjective Well-being	4.1	0.7	3.7	0.6
Debt Situation	0.3	0.3**	0.2	0.2**

Source: Calculated by author

*Men's average education is used to represent household level achievements, as they have higher levels than women within families.

**The confidence interval is calculated instead of standard deviation for the respective debt situations.

At the individual level, men are older, obtain higher education, and earn higher average incomes than women in the sample. As shown in Table 3.1, left-behind women, on average, are younger, have lower education levels, are committed to higher debt rates, and report higher subjective well-being than non-left-behind women. Even though the gap of average educational achievements between women and men is not very significant, individual women or men's achievements in each level present a very different pattern, as shown in Table 3.2. While more than half of the men from both types of families have finished their primary education, with 56.9% and 54.8% in left behind and non-left behind households respectively, less than 50% of both sets of women have completed junior high school. However, women's higher educational achievements in junior high school may be offset by their smaller share in both categories of individuals achieving less than primary or primary school than men, thus leading to their relatively lower average educational achievements than men. More specifically, within the women's groups, the share of left-behind women with less than primary education is much greater than the non-left-behind women, with 13.8% and 4.3%, respectively. The average age of left-behind women is 44.8, which is slightly younger than the average of 45.3 years for the non-left-behind women.

Table 3.2 Women and men's educational achievements

Education	Left-behind Household		Non-left-behind Household	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Cumulative Percentage				
Less than primary	13.8%	27.6%	4.3%	24.7%
Primary	27.6%	56.9%	30.1%	54.8%
Junior high	41.4%	13.8%	47.3%	16.1%
Senior high	13.8%	0.0%	15.1%	0.0%
Polytechnic school	3.4%	1.7%	2.2%	1.1%
University and above	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	3.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: calculated by author

Both left-behind women and their husbands report higher than average subjective well-being, with average scores of 4.1 and 3.7, respectively, versus 3.5 and 3.4 among non-left-behind women and husbands, respectively. In general, women also claim higher values of subjective well-being than their male counterparts, overall, suggesting that women may have higher adaptive capacities than men during unexpected structural life shocks. As shown in the literature

on women's role during natural disasters, women's higher subjective well-being normally transfers to their better adaptation after natural disasters than their male partners (Peacock, Morrow & Gladwin, 1999; Forthergil, 2004). However, it is also possible that women's higher subjective well-being status is because they have already adapted to the changing environment.

As to the debt status of both groups, 29.3% of left-behind women and 21.7% of non-left-behind women report that they had debt in the previous year. For their husbands, 20.7% of both male groups report that they borrowed money or equivalent-value materials from sources where return on value is expected. The similar percentage of men and women from non-left-behind households reporting family debts may reflect that these couples are well aware of their debt situations due to their co-presence at home most times of the year. Following the same logic, a plausible explanation for the differences between left-behind women and their husbands may be that migrant husbands do not always know the exact financial situations of the family due to their long-term separation from home. Given a higher proportion of left-behind women than their husbands reporting that they owe debts of some sort, the actual debt situation for left-behind households may be accorded to women's claims. In any case, left-behind households borrow more than non-left-behind ones.

Lower educational attainment is more likely to lead migrant men to engage in lower-ranked professions than their left-behind male counterparts, according to human capital theory (Shultz, 1961). As shown in Table 3.3, 85% of the total migrant men engage in labor work whereas only 40% of men from non-left-behind households work in the same category. More specifically, within the labor work classification, 23 out of 48, or nearly 48% of the total migrant males are construction workers, while only 5 of 32, or about 16% of men from non-left-behind households, engage in that same category of labor. Furthermore, only 8% of migrant workers participate in the skill-demand category of earth-moving equipment worker, while 22% of their non-migrant fellow members engage in the same category. Even mostly working in lower-ranked jobs, migrant workers still managed to earn higher incomes than their left-behind counterparts, with average incomes of 21,727 Yuan and 16,345 Yuan, respectively.

This finding, together with other factors such as bigger family size, higher debt rates, and more farmland possession, suggests that migrant husbands may be forced by the heavier family debt burden to engage in longer-term migrant work. Consequently, women may be left behind to take care of the family and agricultural production as part of a split-household strategy.

Table 3.3 Men's vocational category

Category	Men from left-behind household		Men from non-left-behind household	
General category				
1. Labor work	48	85%	32	40%
2. Salary work	2	4%	4	5%
3. Freelance work	3	5%	11	14%
4. Production	2	4%	3	4%
5. Business	0	0%	1	1%
6. Agriculture activity	1	2%	30	36%
Total number	56	100%	81	100%
Within labor work				
1. Construction worker	23	48%	5	16%
2. Earth worker	4	8%	7	22%
3. Agriculture worker	0	0%	10	31%
Total number	27	56%	22	69%

Source: Calculated by the author

3.3.2 Calculation of Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture index (WEAI) contains two sub-indexes: Five Domains of Empowerment (5DE) and the Gender Parity Index (GPI). The five domains denoted by the 5DE are: agricultural production, resources, income, leadership, and time, and these are comprised of ten indicators in total. Each indicator is designed to measure whether each individual reached a certain threshold or has adequate achievement with respect to each indicator. The 5DE are measured using 10 indicators with their corresponding weights calculated according to their composition within each domain. A woman is defined as empowered in 5DE if she has adequate achievements in four of the five domains or is empowered in some combination of the weighted indicators beyond the 80th percentile. On the flip side, since the sum of the five domains of empowerment and disempowerment is equal to one (Alkire et al., 2013), a woman is defined as disempowered if her inadequacy achievements are less in four domains, or the sum of weighted indicators is less than the 80th percentile. The GPI measures gender parity within surveyed households, which also reflects the percentage of women who are equally empowered as the men in their households.

To identify the areas that contribute the most to disempowerment for women and men and to facilitate the interpretation of the 5 domains of disempowerment (M_0), the disempowered headcount ratio (H_p), the average inadequacy score of disempowered individuals (A_p), the percentage of women who are without gender parity (H_w), and the average empowerment gap between women and men (R_p) are calculated; the positive terms are also presented accordingly. Notably, it is critical to understand that the sub-indexes and their components can be presented and interpreted both in terms of empowerment and disempowerment, in order to reflect the relativity between the two terms (Alkire et al., 2012). Consequently, empowerment and disempowerment are both used to facilitate the between-group comparison in this study.

3.3.2.1 Five domains of empowerment (5DE)

Although 5DE is used to measure women's empowerment in certain domains, it is useful to construct 5DE in such a way that disempowerment is also identified and analyzed as the two terms, empowerment and disempowerment, are bonded and interrelated with each other (Alkire et al., 2012; Kabeer, 2001). In this way, the critical domains as well as indicators that contribute to women's disempowerment can be identified and integrated into policy-making. Thus, the 5 domains of disempowerment (M_0) are calculated first; then the 5DE can be obtained by $(1 - M_0)$. M_0 composes two parts of information: the disempowered headcount ratio (H_p) and the average inadequacy score of disempowered individuals (A_p). The disempowered headcount (H_p) is defined as the ratio between individuals whose inadequate achievements in the five domains of disempowerment are beyond the cut-off inadequacy percentile (k) within a given population. The average inadequacy score of disempowered individuals (A_p) is calculated based on the average proportion of weighted inadequate achievements identifying disempowered people. In this sense, H_p can be further denoted as $H_p = q/n$, where q is the number of disempowered individuals, and n is the total population; A_p can be shown as $A_p = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^q c_i(k)}{q}$, where $c_i(k)$ is the "censored inadequacy score"¹⁶ of individual i and q is the number of disempowered individuals. Thus, by

¹⁶ The disempowerment cut-off is the share of (weighted) inadequacies a woman must have to be considered disempowered, and is denoted as " k ." The notation $c_i(k)$ is the censored inadequacy score which is different from the original inadequacy score " k ." Note that when $c_i > k$, then $c_i(k) = c_i$, but if $c_i \leq k$, then $c_i(k) = 0$. Thus, for women whose inadequacy score is less than or equal to the disempowerment cut-off, even if it is not 0, their score is replaced by 0, and any existing inadequacies are not considered in the "censored headcounts."

definition, 5 domains of disempowerment are expressed as $M_0 = H_p \times A_p$. Finally, 5DE can also be obtained:

$$5DE = 1 - M_0 = 1 - (H_p \times A_p)$$

3.3.2.2 Gender parity index (GPI)

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is a relative measure that reflects the inequality in 5DE profiles between the primary adult male and female in each household. Men's inadequacy scores are calculated in the same way as women's. The "censored inadequacy score" also applies here. Based on the inadequacy cut-off threshold, each dual-adult family is either categorized as having gender parity or not. A family is classified as having gender parity if the woman is empowered according to her adequacy achievements, or, in the case that she is not empowered and her censored inadequacy score is lower than her husband's (Alkire et al., 2013). Thus, to calculate the GPI score, two pieces of information need to be aggregated in a similar way as the 5DE calculation. The two components are the percentage of women who are without gender parity, denoted as H_w , and the average empowerment gap between women and men, depicted as R_p . Thus, by definition, the GPI can be expressed as:

$$GPI = 1 - (H_w \times R_p).$$

3.3.2.3 Women's empowerment in agriculture index (WEAI)

The WEAI is aggregated by 90% of the 5DE sub-index and 10% of the mean GPI value. The principle of calculating the final WEAI is explained above; however, it is quite time-consuming and sophisticated to substitute and aggregate all the data to obtain the 5DE, GPI and WEAI, respectively. To simplify the calculation process and to guarantee the consistent application of the WEAI method, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) WEAI resource center provides two STATA.do files for the calculation of WEAI. The first do file is programed to convert all answers from the questionnaires to either sub-datasets or aggregated indicators that are ready for further calculation. The second do file is written with commands that substitute data and indicators for the calculation of 5DE, GPI and WEAI.

In this study, the original STATA do files are mainly refined from multiple-national level to single nation level to allow replication of pilot results from other countries in the "Feed the Future Zone" while also reflecting local contexts in China. Since WEAI has never been applied or tested in China, preliminary results can be obtained first in relative parity with calculations

undertaken for other countries. Then, the results can be also used to check if they are compatible with results from other countries.

3.3.3 Justifications before between-group comparison

The purpose of this WEAI pilot study is to test whether being left behind enables women to be empowered in their agricultural activities. To test the case, this study is designed to compare the empowerment status between left-behind and non-left-behind women, as measured by the WEAI. If left-behind women achieve a higher WEAI score than non-left-behind women, it would be reasonable to claim that being left behind contributes to left-behind women's relative increased empowerment, if everything else between the two groups is identical.

Covariate matching is a matching method that is often used to tackle selection bias, since matching all the covariates, by its definition, can remove the difference of characteristics between the treatment and comparison groups. However, if selection bias is not merely due to observables, the covariate matching method cannot be performed. Given the fact that the selection bias of the data collection is due to factors other than observable variables, covariate matching is not adopted in this study.

Notably, a number of studies have been carried out to examine whether and under what circumstances non-experimental comparison-group methods, like the approach used in this study, can replicate the results of well-conducted randomized controlled trials (Bloom, Michalopoulos & Hill, 2005; Cook, Shadish & Wong, 2008). In these 'design-replication' studies, researchers run experiments between the same treatment group and different comparison groups for two times. The comparison groups are selected by either randomized or non-randomized methods, respectively. By comparing the results from the two tests, researchers examine whether the comparison-group estimates replicate the benchmark estimates from the fully randomized design.

As noted by these studies, if remarkable differences, such as demographics, motivations, and ability, exist between treatment and comparison groups, the study is still unable to produce valid results (Cook, Shadish & Wong, 2008; Glazerman, Levy, and Myers, 2003). However, some common elements that improve the validity of any comparison-group studies are identified: first, the two groups should have very similar pre-treatment characteristics, such as demographic attributes, pre-treatment measurement of potential outcomes, and geographic locations; second, data should be collected in the same way for both groups; third, participants in the two groups

should have similar motivations for participation; fourth, statistical methods are used to adjust minor pre-treatment differences between the two groups.

As shown in data description section, the left-behind and non-left-behind household samples satisfy most of the terms mentioned above, except that no data was available from before the husbands' migration. Constrained by the availability of data, both sets of households are assumed to present similar patterns before the cut-off line of migration. This assumption is partly supported by the fact that both types of households can be mostly paired in the same villages and were interviewed by the same procedures. In this sense, the between-group comparison in this study may be considered as providing similar results as totally randomized samples.

To further produce valid between-group comparisons, other endogenous as well as exogenous factors that may influence the results should be also considered and confined.

According to relevant studies, age cohorts are normally selected as the matching estimator to reduce differences between the treatment and comparison groups (Wu & Ye, 2016). In this study, age is also an appropriate differentiator between the groups.

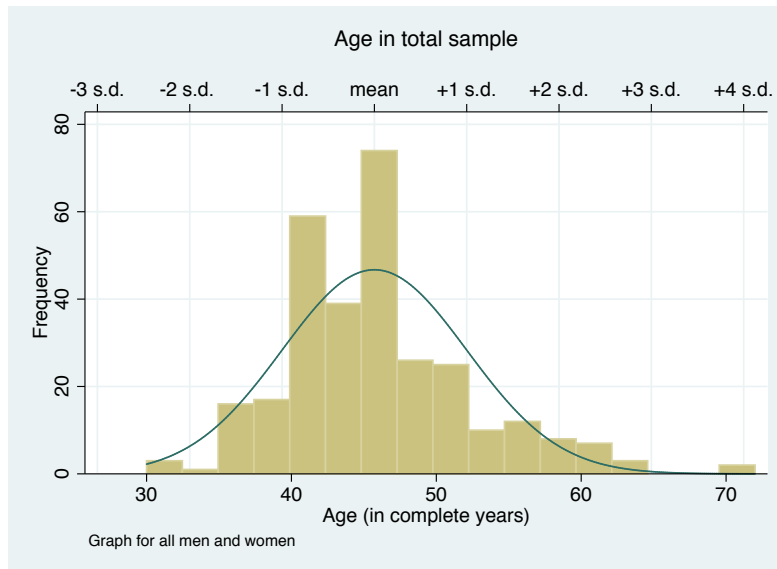
First, as shown in Figure 3.4, while the majority of individuals fall into the -3 standard deviation and +3 standard deviation, people aged beyond 70 are outliers in the right tail of the age distribution. Thus, if omitting the oldest non-left-behind participants from the sample, individuals are distributed more evenly and symmetrically along the mean. Consequently, the histograms of both left-behind and non-left-behind households also share a very similar shape, where the majority of people from both groups are concentrated in the cohort from 40 to 50, as shown in Figure 3.5.

Secondly, it is meaningless to include only one oldest non-left-behind family in the comparison. From the sample, one non-left-behind couple aged between 70 and 80 is the oldest family across the two groups, whereas the oldest left-behind women and men fall primarily in the 61-70 years of age cohorts. Moreover, as most literature on left-behind women shows, the age of affected women ranges from 30 to 60, while women aged 70 or beyond are normally categorized as old women rather than old left-behind women (Fan, 2003; Hu, 2009).

Lastly, the finite sample size before and after the matching process needs to be considered. As Bryson, Dorsett and Purdon (2002) noted, if the number of lost individuals was small relative to the total sample, this lack of information may not pose any serious problems. However, if the proportion of missing data is significant or the total sample size is relatively small, the estimated

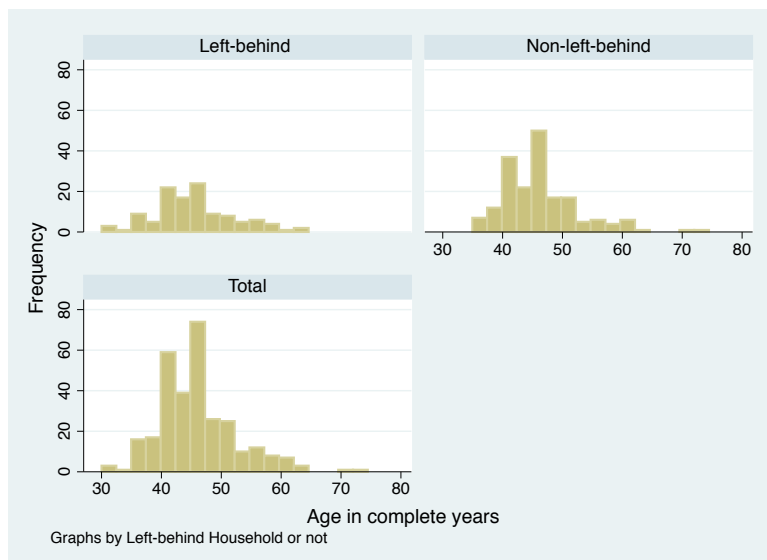
effects on the remaining individuals may be problematic and biased. Since the sample size of this study is already very limited, maintaining a sufficient sample for making valid and typical comparisons needs to be carefully considered.

Figure 3.4 Age distribution of total sample



Source: derived from the sample

Figure 3.5 Age distribution between left-behind households and non-left-behind households



Source: derived from the sample

Hence, left-behind and non-left-behind households are matched by excluding the oldest non-left-behind family in the sample. In each village, the left-behind and non-left-behind households were selected and interviewed by the same enumerator, using the same procedure. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 3.2, the distribution of distance between the two groups' villages and the closest cities also approximately coincides. Thus, it may be reasonable to assume that the two groups are under similar exogenous environments. There may be other socioeconomic factors that contribute to gender relations within participating households. However, given the limited sample size and available internal and external factors, an approximately reasonable comparison between left-behind and non-left-behind households can be achieved.

3.4 Results and discussion

After matching left-behind and non-left-behind households on their age, the 5DE, GPI and WEAI for both sets of women, as well as for all women have been calculated. The WEAI for all women in the sample was calculated and used to provide a reference point for the results from the three pilot regions. To identify which indicators of 5DE contribute to disempowerment, the 5DE for both types of households are also disaggregated. Furthermore, the possible associations between women's empowerment in agriculture and their education, age and subjective well-being have also been presented.

3.4.1 Results of 5DE, GPI and WEAI

After matching the left-behind and non-left-behind households by their overlapping age ranges, the 5DE, GPI and WEAI were calculated for both groups. As shown in Table 3.4, the 5DE, GPI, and WEAI for left-behind and non-left-behind women are 0.882, 0.970, 0.891 and 0.803, 0.919, 0.814, respectively. This shows that the absolute empowerment scores of left-behind households are higher than non-left-behind households in all three categories.

As defined earlier, a woman is defined as empowered in 5DE if she has adequate achievements in four of the five domains or is empowered in some combination of the weighted indicators beyond the 80th percentile. Based on left-behind women's 5DE shown in Table 3.4, 60.5% of women are empowered while 39.5% of women, who are not empowered, have average inadequacy achievements in 29.8% of the five domains of disempowerment. Whereas 42% of non-left-behind women are empowered, the rest of the women who are disempowered have, on

average, inadequate achievements in 34% of the domains of disempowerment. This shows that more non-left-behind women are disempowered than their counterparts. The non-left-behind women who are disempowered also achieve less adequate scores across all domains than the left-behind women. Hence, left-behind women are not only more empowered than non-left-behind women as measured by the aggregated WEAI scores they also present higher proportions of empowered headcounts and adequacy achievements than non-left-behind women.

Table 3.4 Results of 5DE, GPI and WEAI

Indexes	Left-behind Households		Non-left-behind Households	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Disempowered Headcount (H)	39.53%	30.23%	57.97%	24.64%
Average Inadequacy Score (A)	29.80%	33.08%	34.00%	32.55%
Disempowerment Index (Mo)	11.78%	10.00%	19.71%	8.02%
5DE (1-Mo)	0.882	0.900	0.803	0.920
% of women with no gender parity (H _{GPI})	26.83%		48.44%	
Average Empowerment Gap (I _{GPI})	11.01%		16.79%	
GPI	0.970		0.919	
WEAI	0.891		0.814	

Source: Calculated by author

Further decomposition of the domains of disempowerment is needed to examine which and how specific indicators contribute differently to women's empowerment and disempowerment. However, before decomposing the 5DE for further analysis, it is necessary to examine whether the WEAI gap between the two groups of left-behind and non-left-behind women is sufficiently large so that further examination of the two types of households is meaningful. One possible way is to conduct an international comparison among countries that have conducted WEAI surveys. The three pilot studies in Bangladesh, Guatemala and Uganda were also conducted at the regional level (Alkire et al., 2013). This study adopts compatible WEAI questionnaires provided by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and builds regional WEAI based on data from Northeastern China. Thus, the WEAI obtained in this study is comparable with the three pilot nations.

According to Table 3.5, the WEAI scores of China, Uganda, Bangladesh and Guatemala are 0.841, 0.800, 0.762, and 0.702 respectively. Notably, China has the highest WEAI score,

which is consistent with current literature on China's feminization of agriculture, where rural women are more likely to engage in managerial roles than women in other developing countries (de Brauw et al., 2008; 2012). Among the three other countries used in this comparison, Uganda has the second highest score of 0.800, which is almost 0.1 points higher than the lowest score of 0.702 in Guatemala. Guatemala's score is 0.06 less than Bangladesh, which has the third highest score of 0.762. Among Bangladesh, Guatemala and Uganda, the average difference in WEAI is 0.067, with a maximum value of 0.1 and a minimum of 0.04 in variation. On the other hand, the WEAI gap between China's left-behind and non-left-behind women is nearly 0.08, which is less than 0.1 but greater than the average WEAI gap among the other three nations, at 0.067. Hence, it is reasonable to state that the gap of WEAI between the left-behind and non-left-behind groups identified in this study is relatively large, as it falls into the higher percentile of the WEAI scores among the four countries.

Table 3.5 International Comparison of WEA

Country	China	Bangladesh	Guatemala	Uganda
Year	2015	2011	2011	2011
WEAI	0.841	0.762	0.702	0.800
5DE	0.829	0.746	0.690	0.789
GPI	0.946	0.899	0.813	0.898
% of women with no gender parity	38.2%	40.2%	64.2%	45.6%
Average Empowerment Gap	14.3%	25.2%	29.1%	22.4%

Source: Author's calculations and results from Alkire et al., (2013)

To identify which factors contribute to the different WEAI scores among countries, some national macro attributes are included in the comparison, such as GDP, GDP per capita, GDP growth rate and the Democracy Index. However, even though China's relatively high GDP and GDP per capita may contribute to its high WEAI score, no consistent relationship patterns exist among the other three countries. Further decomposition of the regional 5DE may shed light on the causes for different WEAI patterns. However, conducting a decomposition of the two sub-indexes for all countries is beyond the scope of this study. For the purpose of this study, only the decomposition of the 5DE between left-behind and non-left-behind women in Northeastern China has been conducted.

3.4.2 Decomposition of women and men's disempowerment scores

A key feature of the 5DE is that once the disempowered have been identified, one can decompose the five domains of disempowerment M_0 (1-5DE), as well as related indicators to reveal how people are disempowered. To decompose by indicators, the censored head-count ratio in each indicator,¹⁷ the percentage contribution and weighted contribution of each indicator to overall disempowerment are calculated. Based on the results obtained, domains and indicators that contribute to both left-behind and non-left-behind women's disempowerment are first compared and discussed. Then, men's disempowerment decomposed by indicators is also integrated into the analysis to facilitate a comparison between and within the two types of households.

To reveal which and how domains or indicators contribute to women's disempowerment, this section includes the relative and absolute contribution of each factor to overall disempowerment, through which a direct and intuitive comparison between left-behind and non-left-behind women can be realized. Table A.1 and Table B.1 with full results of the censored headcount ratio, the percentage contribution, and absolute contribution of each indicator are attached in the Appendix.

As shown in Figures 3.6 and 3.7, domains for the left-behind sample that contribute the most to women's disempowerment are weak leadership (35%) and time poverty (27%), whereas weak leadership (30%) and ownership of resources (25%) contribute most to the disempowerment of non-left-behind women. The ownership of resources has almost similar effects on both groups' disempowerment, with the same score of 25%. Leadership and time poverty together contribute more than 50% to both left-behind and non-left-behind women's disempowerment, with left-behind women being more affected by the two domains than non-left-behind women.

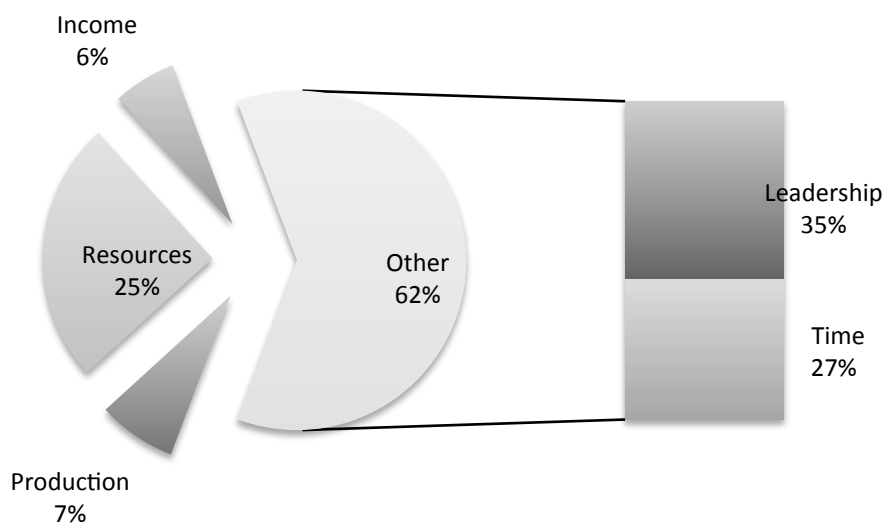
Notably, decision-making on production and control of income, which accounts for a very small percentage of disempowerment for both teams, have substantially different impacts on left-behind and non-left-behind women. These two managerial domains pose nearly two times the effect on the disempowerment of non-left-behind women, at 12% and 11%, respectively, as

¹⁷ The censored headcount ratio in each indicator refers to the number of disempowered people who are deprived based on that indicator, divided by the total population. More specifically, to count only the disempowered numbers, people, whose inadequacy scores are more than the cut-off threshold, are included. People whose inadequacy scores are less or equal to the threshold, are excluded as well as "censored" since they are considered as empowered based on their scores.

compared to the left-behind women, at 7% and 6%. Admittedly, these two domains may cause the differences in disempowerment between the two groups. However, conclusions should be made in caution, considering the relatively small weights of these two domains to others.

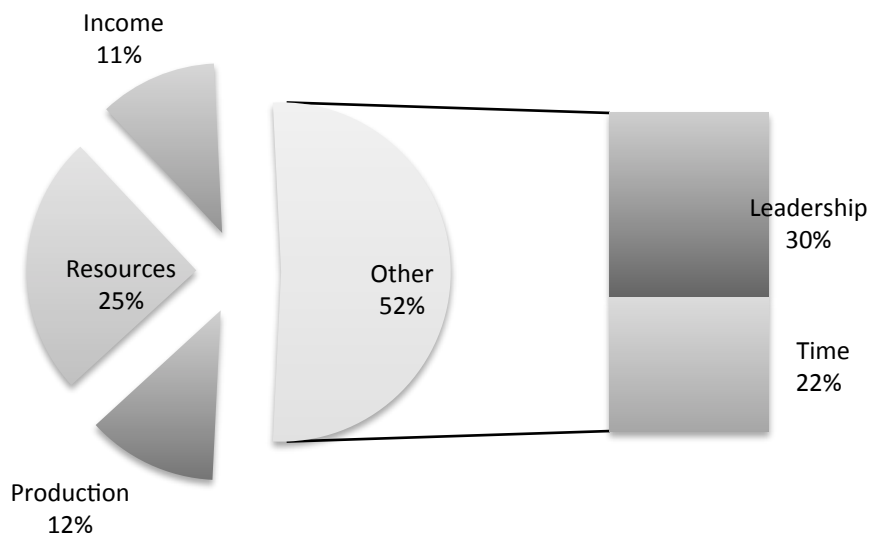
While women's domains of disempowerment present an intuitive demonstration of what factors may contribute to the disempowerment gap between the two groups of women, further decomposition of the 5DE at the indicator level may reveal specific factors involved in the different disempowerment status obtained between left-behind and non-left-behind women.

Figure 3.6 Contributions to left-behind women's disempowerment



Source: Author's calculation

Figure 3.7 Contributions to non-left-behind women's disempowerment



Source: Author's calculation

In Figure 3.8, the absolute and weighted contributions of ten indicators of disempowerment for women as well as men are stacked and presented. In other words, more achievement in indicators means more empowerment and less disempowerment, as the totalling of five domains as well as ten indicators of disempowerment and empowerment is equal to one. Thus, an increase of empowerment indicates a comparable decrease of disempowerment for the same group simultaneously.

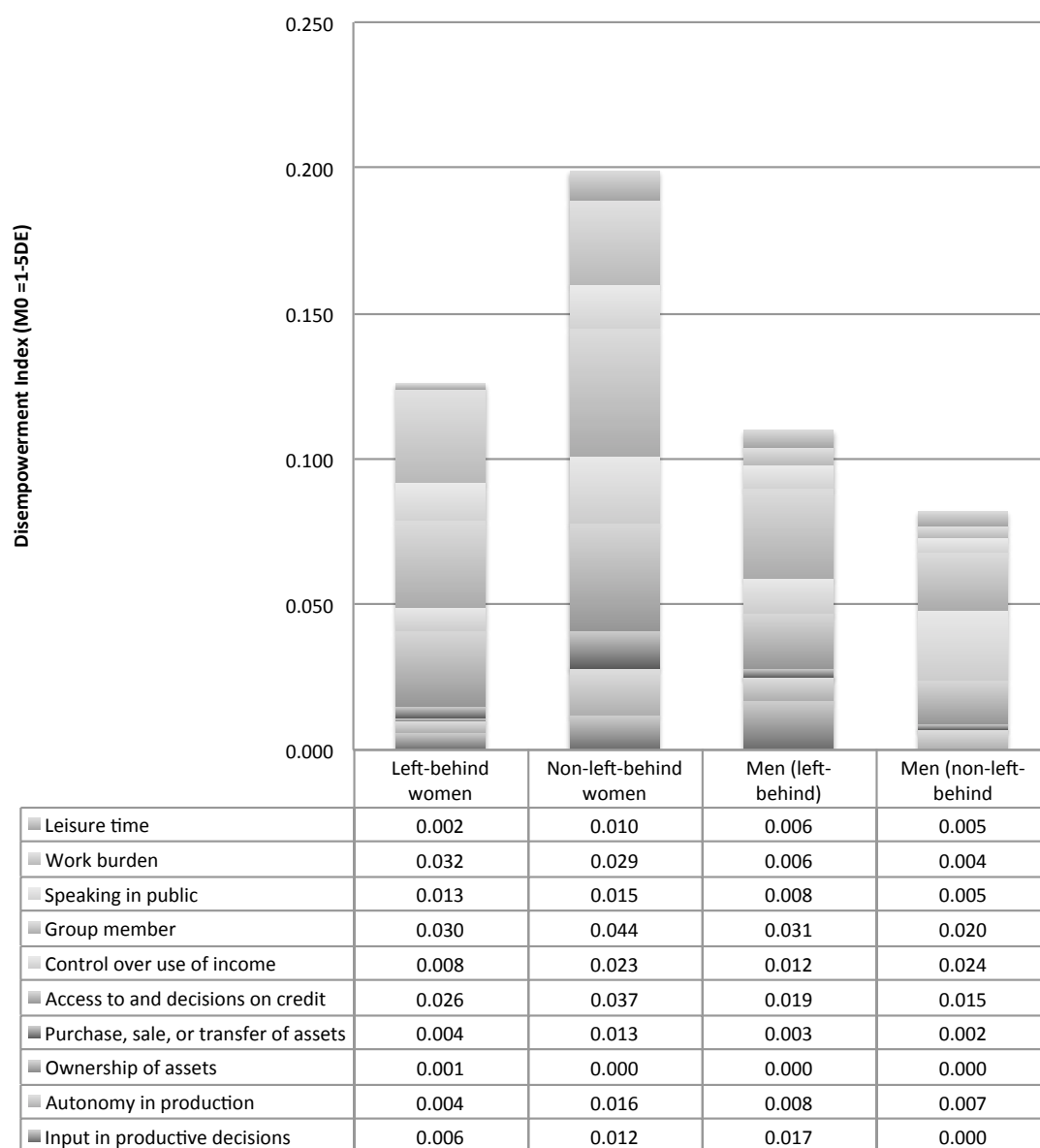
Figure 3.8 shows that men are generally more empowered than both groups of women as measured by their achievement in all indicators, with men from non-left-behind households as most empowered and their female partners as least empowered. More specifically, non-left-behind women are about twice as disempowered as their husbands, whereas left-behind women and their husbands have nearly equal achievement in total indicators. This finding is consistent with Wouterse's (2016) study on the impact of women's empowerment on agricultural production in Nigeria, where women in dual-adult households are the least empowered and are also much less empowered compared with their counterparts in female-only households.

The indicators that make a significant contribution to both sets of women's measures of disempowerment are access to and decisions on credit, membership in any collective groups, and workload. Additionally, while control over use of income affects non-left-behind women's disempowerment substantially, it also causes a great gap between the two groups of women, with values of 0.023 for left-behind and 0.008 for non-left-behind women, respectively. This difference may be due mainly to the fact that left-behind women play major roles in managing the remittances from their migrant husbands, combined with other income from agricultural production. According to the "household strategy theory" (Stark & Bloom, 1985), migration is part of a strategic family decision to diversify risks, with the remittances from migrants as the major economic tie between affected family members. However, there are no such opportunities to help manage household funds for non-left-behind women.

Surprisingly, the presence of non-left-behind women's husbands may not necessarily lead to their relatively inferior positions compared to their husbands in controlling agricultural revenue. As shown in Figure 3.8, the control over income makes the most contribution to the disempowerment of men from non-left-behind households as well, with a value of 0.024 slightly

higher than their wives' 0.023. Furthermore, migrant husbands follow a similar pattern, showing lower achievement than their female partners in this indicator.

Figure 3.8 Absolute contributions of indicators to disempowerment between men and women



One possible explanation may be found in the unequal negotiations that characterize relations between small farmers and big agricultural businesses, since lack of group membership and access to decisions on credit make greater contributions to both men's and women's disempowerment overall, as shown in Figure 3.8. More specifically, it is the lack of group

membership within the community that results in substantial disempowerment across all women and men. This consistent pattern implies that farmer's organizations in any form are not well developed in the sampled region, or it may be difficult for farmers to join any kind of collective organizations. Consequently, the price for agricultural products may be almost exclusively determined by large agricultural corporations, thus limiting both men and women's achievement of control over their incomes, with left-behind households better off than non-left-behind ones.

On the one hand, earnings from agriculture constitute major revenues for the non-left-behind households; thus, lack of power in negotiating sale prices within the market leads to disempowerment for the whole household, especially for the husbands as the heads of their families. On the other hand, through migration, left-behind households are able to diversify their revenue sources; thus, lack of control of income in agriculture has less impact on the disempowerment of migrant husbands. However, men from left-behind households may be more constrained by the difficulty of getting their salary than their wives, as unpaid salary to migrant workers is a common phenomenon in urban China (Cai, 2011; Fan, 2008).

The different empowerment opportunity windows facing both sets of women in this case study become more evident when taking specific economic empowerment indicators, including input into production decisions, autonomy in production, and purchase, sale, or transfer of assets, into account. These indicators present the greatest disempowerment gap between the two groups of women, with left-behind women's achievement in all indicators much higher than non-left-behind women's. For left-behind women, their migrant husbands are away for most of the year and may return only during the harvest season or for the major holidays (Yu et al., 2011). There are not many choices for the family other than leaving the women to be in charge of what to grow and how to plant. This, in turn, leads them to control the income that originates from their purchase, sale or transfer of agricultural products and assets, as compared with non-left-behind women. If the husband is present at home, he is responsible for most of the agricultural decision-making and related activities, due to the old cultural ideology "men for planting, women for weaving" (Jacka, 2014). Hence, being away from their migrant husbands enables rural women to gain decision-making power in agriculture that was once denied to them.

Another indicator exhibiting the greatest gap in disempowerment between the two female groups is leisure time within the time poverty domain, where left-behind women have five times more leisure time than non-left-behind women, at 0.002 versus 0.01, respectively. Notably, while

left-behind women perform better in leisure time than their non-left-behind female counterparts, they are more constrained in workload than non-left-behind women, which has substantial effects on both women's disempowerment, as presented above.

Unlike other indicators, including leisure time and control of income, the workload indicator enters the WEAI negatively by its construction. It describes whether a woman, who is burdened by paid and unpaid work, is disempowered (Alkire et al., 2013). Moreover, the workload may present a nonlinear pattern in empowerment, since workload may initially increase, accompanied by empowerment, before reaching a critical threshold; when passing that point, the impact of workload on empowerment may decrease and move toward disempowerment, creating time poverty through additional time spent and an overburden of workload (Malapit et al, 2013). In this sense, the significant value of workload for both groups of women reflects that both are subject to an excess of agricultural and domestic work, with left-behind women having more workload than non-left-behind women.

This finding is partially consistent with most literature on left-behind women, stating that a heavy work burden and little free time together reduce left-behind women's well-being (Mu & van de Walle, 2011). However, it is problematic to state that left-behind women are worse off by focusing only on workload, since left-behind women do self-report more leisure time than non-left-behind women, as shown in Figure 3.8. The different perception of leisure time between the two types of women may be due to the fact that non-left-behind women have to do more housework for their husbands than left-behind women, resulting in less leisure time for themselves. Another reason may be that left-behind women's relatively greater empowerment in production and income than non-left-behind women enables them to achieve greater self-esteem, to some extent. Thus, even though they may have limited leisure time, they may still feel less affected and therefore, more empowered than non-left-behind women. Furthermore, by differentiating workload and leisure time within the time poverty domain, it makes women's overloaded domestic work more visible, revealing the substantial gender inequalities facing women within the different types of households.

Interestingly, ownership of assets contributes the least to women's disempowerment and also has a consistent impact on men's disempowerment showing a zero value. An explanation may be that farmland is collectively owned in rural China, as defined by the land tenure system. Consequently, no individual can act using the full property rights of land. Unless there is a

change in the land tenure institution, land ownership does not affect people's empowerment whatsoever. Furthermore, due to the fact that men are commonly household heads, the titles of asset possessions, including use of farmland, homestead sites and other resources, are usually under their names, which makes them de facto owner of family assets. This, in turn, may lead to asset ownership providing zero contribution to men's disempowerment.

However, the explanation for women is somewhat different from men's. While men are the nominal and actual owner of household assets, women rarely own any form of family property. In this sense, women's exclusion from owning assets, whether men are present or not, causes no obvious difference between sets of women. Traditional patterns of asset ownership confirm that male-centered gender relations operate within both types of households.

In sum, it becomes clear that the absence of their male partners leads left-behind women to be more empowered in taking control of the family income, managing agricultural production, purchasing, sale and transfer of assets, and managing to have more leisure time than the non-left-behind women. While being left behind may lead to women's empowerment in agriculture, gender inequality is still present within and beyond households both through men's absolute control in ownership of assets and non-left-behind women's lack of leisure time, owing to their overburden of unpaid domestic work. Lastly, the lack of group membership, access to credit, and men's control of their income across both types of households reveals that farmers face extensive socioeconomic discrimination and exploitation in both the urban and agricultural sectors, a ubiquitous condition of rural families that impacts all members of all households.

3.4.3 Women's empowerment and gender inequality

Intra-household gender relations can be revealed by decomposition of the Gender Parity Index (GPI). As shown in Table 3.4, more than 73% of left-behind women enjoy gender parity within their households, whereas only 52% of their non-left-behind counterparts have gender parity with their husbands. For the 27% of left-behind women who are less empowered, the gendered empowerment gap with their husbands is around 11%. The average gender empowerment gap for women, who are not empowered and constitute nearly 50% of the total non-left-behind women, is 17%. It can be seen that the empowerment gaps for the two groups are relatively small compared to 25%, 29% and 22% in Bangladesh, Guatemala and Uganda, respectively (Alkire et al., 2013). Furthermore, at the regional level, 62% of Chinese women have gender parity within their households (as shown in Table 8) while 59%, 36%, and 54% of women

from the three pilot countries enjoy gender parity. This means China's women in the sample region not only achieve more empowerment, but also enjoy more gender equality within their families than their counterparts in the other three developing countries where WEAI has been tested.

Notably, the difference in the gendered power gap between the two types of households is relatively large at 6%, given that the average difference in empowerment gaps among the three pilot countries is only 4.7%. This may reflect that power relations within both sets of Chinese women's households are quite different due to the absence or presence of their husbands. It also implies that left-behind women's greater empowerment in agriculture may also improve gender equality within the household.

3.5 Conclusion and policy implications

Increasing numbers of studies on left-behind women's well-being and their roles in agriculture have emerged and drawn wide attention from the government, academia and the public. However, the common ground through which these parties address the issues and make claims still reflects an old paradigm rooted in patriarchal society. Under this patriarchal ideology, left-behind women are generally depicted as a vulnerable group of passive decision-takers. Consequently, most studies address the negative impacts of male-dominated migration patterns on their lives while leaving the key question—how left-behind women adapt and cope with the absence of their husbands—unanswered.

This chapter first aims to tackle the question from the perspective of women's agency and opportunities for empowerment in agriculture. It assumes women can make strategic life decisions and positive changes through the agency available to them, and can build wider spheres of influence, and further, that this agency can be affected positively by being left-behind. Based on fieldwork conducted in rural Northeastern China, using the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), the present study shows that women who are separated from their husbands can gain greater access to decision-making in agriculture, a condition that is impossible for non-left-behind women, whose male partners are present in their households. In other words, staying behind in rural areas may empower left-behind women through their adoption of a degree of economic autonomy in agriculture, relative to women who stay with their husbands in rural areas. While increasing women's empowerment may have a strong impact on shifting gender inequality to some extent in individual households, as the results of the GPI have shown, both

groups of women still face extensive and substantial gender inequality within and beyond their households. Given the fact that gender inequality presents itself in a wider socioeconomic context, it is critical to recognize the importance of women's agency while also understanding women in relation to the micro and macro systems in which they interact, in order to propose policy initiatives that ultimately reduce gender inequality.

An important aim of this chapter is to point the way toward an empirically richer understanding of left-behind women's agency and well-being, by measuring their empowerment directly and quantitatively. The pilot application of WEAI, which was designed exclusively to measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agricultural sector among "Feed the Future" countries, has significant implications for policy and practice in China. Comparing results with the other three countries in which WEAI has been tested shows that the empowerment gap between China's left-behind and non-left-behind women is relatively sizable; it also reveals that the results are compatible with the other countries tested, which further validates the eligible and effective application of WEAI in China and other countries where a large population remains involved in agriculture. The present study advances our understanding of left-behind women's adaptive experiences during the absence of their husbands. Left-behind women's actualization through self-empowerment in agriculture may have spill-over or transferable effects on rural women in general, if they can be provided with supportive policy measures to address areas contributing to their disempowerment. Recognizing women's agency in agricultural production may have long-term positive impacts on China's agricultural outcomes, as confirmed by studies on women's empowerment in agriculture in the global context (Alkire et al., 2013; World Bank, 2011).

As this study is the first attempt to apply WEAI in the context of China, some limitations need to be stressed:

- The survey area is not nationally representative; hence, conclusions on women's situations may be different in other regions
- Due to the design of WEAI, women who are engaged in non-agricultural activities may appear disempowered and are excluded from the sample; this further limits the total sample size (to 151 households), compared to the average size of the overall sample from the three pilot provinces (383 households)

- The focus on agriculture may not capture other domains of empowerment that may have significant impacts on transforming gendered power relations, especially when migrant husbands and left-behind wives finally reunite and live in cities, if they ever do.

Future studies that attempt to build an alternative index measuring women's empowerment in wider public or market spheres through a national survey with randomized and adequate samples of both left-behind and non-left-behind households may advance the results of this study.

This study also has several policy implications. Even though the results are not nationally representative, policies and social programs could be better informed by tracking changes in empowerment over time, particularly for the same individuals and households, to see whether there is an improvement or deterioration of women's status in agriculture. Furthermore, one of the greatest contributions of WEAI is to make it possible to identify and highlight specific domains of empowerment and disempowerment, as well as to show how multidimensional indicators can be aggregated and disaggregated to provide a comprehensive analysis of women's empowerment in agriculture. This information can enhance the gender mainstreaming of agricultural development programs, addressing relevant domains for constructive policy and practice intervention. More specifically, by further unpacking the five domains of disempowerment as measured by WEAI, this study confirms that heavy workloads, as one of the indicators, contribute significantly to left-behind women's disempowerment. However, they are still considered relatively empowered, compared to non-left-behind women, as their overall adequacy achievement in other domains surpasses the cut-off threshold. Policies designed to improve left-behind women's well-being also need to integrate possible ways of empowering their decision-making capacities in order to improve their overall capacities and achievements.

The study has also shown that lack of wider group membership has persistent impacts on the disempowerment of all women and men in the research region. Thus, policies designed to promote the development of collective organizations, such as rural farmer's co-operatives or agricultural production teams, may have profound effects on increasing women's as well as men's empowerment in agricultural co-operatives, not only increasing the market negotiating power of farmers in general, but also enabling women to raise their self-esteem through interactive learning with each other (Song & Vernooy, 2010).

Against the widely accepted negative conceptualization of left-behind women in policy and public discourse, this study shows that left-behind women may well adapt to new opportunities and help to make positive changes for themselves and their families by managing family income and making decisions on agricultural production. Thus, social support programs need to be designed in a way that facilitates the extension of their agency, rather than relying merely on the basis of first-aid support. Admittedly, being left behind does provide women the opportunity to be empowered in some ways; however, it is irrational and impractical to keep wives and husbands separated from each other as a long-term strategy to enhance women's empowerment. Ultimately, to significantly improve the overall well-being and gender parity for both rural women and their male partners would entail steadfast commitment to improvement in all aspects of farming families' actualization of their human capital through the enhancement of social and economic infrastructure in the countryside on one hand, and to incorporating meaningful ways to integrate migrant families into urban society and China's developing economy on the other.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes and concludes the dissertation by synthesizing results and insights from the two preceding chapters. The section following the summary presents theoretical and policy implications in relation to China's capacity to undertake alternative urbanization approaches. Finally, future studies that can address the limitations of the present study are also considered.

4.1 Summary

After more than three decades of rapid economic growth, China's urbanization has come to a place where farmers and their families, as well as migrant workers, are all being left outside mainstream development policy platforms, while farmland is becoming the main subject of urban expansion. Consequently, China's current urbanization pattern features an under-urbanization of farmers while over-urbanizing its farmland. Institutions and state policies promoting economic development contribute to this land-biased pattern. Meanwhile, gender inequality coupled with other social factors affect intra-household and inter-household gendered divisions of labor, leading to male-dominated migration that leaves female farmers even further behind. Given China's deepening integration in global economic systems and the challenges it faces in achieving inclusive and sustained development, it becomes apparent that excluding farmers and rural women from sharing in the prosperity cannot be sustained. An alternative pathway for an inclusive, sustainable, and gender equitable urbanization is needed.

Given that China's current land-biased urbanization is the outcome of its growth-maximizing approaches, alternative development theory that originates from the extensive failures of mainstream economic development in alleviating global poverty in the 1960s may shed new light into alternative models of economic growth featuring a more inclusive approach to urbanization in China. More specifically, Friedmann's (1992) alternative development framework, which adopts a holistic approach to describe peasant farmers' empowerment during the transformation from traditional rural sectors to modern urban sectors, is applied to guide the terms of analysis in this dissertation, which bear significant implications for urbanization in China, overall. In this way, the motives, behavior and interaction among all participants, including the state, market, private corporations, and rural laborers, can be explored. Building on

Friedmann's (1992) work on alternative development, inclusion, sustainability and gender equality are proposed as important features of more people-oriented urbanization in China.

To seek empirical evidence on whether such alternative pathways are compatible with China's context and to provide insights into China's current and future capacity for more inclusive and sustainable urbanization patterns, two independent but linked investigations, emphasizing empowerment and choice, as guided by the alternative urbanization framework, have been conducted.

Chapter two examines Chongqing's farmer-oriented urbanization model, and integrates its results with the World Bank's empowerment framework in order to propose possibilities for transforming China's approaches to development and growth from land-centered toward more people-oriented urbanization policies. The proposed policy suite and revised World Bank empowerment framework are built on the idea of empowering the disempowered and adapting alternative development approaches to the socialist context of China. In this way, farmers and migrant workers, who are normally excluded and disempowered during urbanization processes, could be integrated and empowered as the main subjects of alternative urbanization in China.

The proposed policy framework is first evaluated in comparison with China's historical and current urbanization patterns. Then, to provide a thorough examination and seek empirical evidence for the potential application of such a framework in China's current practices, a case study of Chongqing was conducted. As shown in that case study, Chongqing's municipal policies, including its public housing, land voucher program and comprehensive hukou reform, have generated a new opportunity structure that enables farmers' to make strategic choices between rural and urban settlement, while also offering them opportunities to integrate more fully into urban life. Furthermore, as one of the pioneers in experimenting with rural-urban integrated development, Chongqing has been able to go beyond the top-down mode of policy design and implementation to further decentralize its policy to reflect the interests and needs of farmers as well as migrant workers. More specifically, Chongqing's practice is centered on developing public appreciation of land value-added revenue, while mainstreaming farmers in the urbanization process. As a central municipality that is under the direct control of the national government, Chongqing's practice illuminates a possible direction for China's future urbanization policy.

The third chapter investigates the impact of the absence of husbands on left-behind women's adaption from the perspective of women's agency and opportunities for empowerment in agriculture. To answer the question of relative empowerment between left-behind and non-left-behind women, the study first adapts the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) for the Chinese context. Based on the results of the WEAI, the study shows that being left behind in rural areas may empower women in terms of agricultural decisions and production, both of which are commonly controlled by men, if they stay at home. While the focus of the study is on left-behind women's empowerment in agriculture, it also reveals intra-household gender relations based on decomposition of the Gender Parity Index (GPI). Against conventional assumptions that left-behind women are passive decision-takers during urbanization, the essay shows that left behind women are not only empowered in agriculture; they also achieve higher gender equality than their rural counterparts within non-left-behind households, as measured by WEAI.

Based on the results of the two case studies, there is evidence that possible alternative pathways to urbanization could evolve from China's current context in ways that are compatible with its current version of state capitalism, while moving toward its socialist ideology of a market economy. However, a significant gap exists between achieving people-oriented urbanization and China's prevailing policies and practices. Taken together, the two chapters that comprise this dissertation advance an argument for rebalancing China's land-oriented urban development toward more farmer-oriented urbanization policies and practices through adapting and integrating international theoretical frameworks into the Chinese context.

4.2 Theoretical significance

By borrowing ideas from alternative development studies in general, and Friedmann's (1992) alternative framework, in particular, this thesis attempts to offer new perspectives on societal and economic transition in China, drawing from, but also adapting mainstream economics theories, by attending to specific opportunities that already exist for improved outcomes. Adapting Friedmann's alternative development framework to guide policy analysis rather than advocating political transformation makes it applicable to China as well as other developing countries. More studies informed by Friedmann's framework, in turn, keep it relevant to current policy discourses and research in alternative development and urbanization.

Based on the case study of Chongqing's equitable urbanization model, which enables members of the rural population to enjoy the benefits of economic growth and integrate into an

urban livelihood if they choose, a combined pattern of capitalist and socialist policy elements is proposed. A primary benefit is that this model resists the hegemonic binary between capitalism and socialism claimed by Western economists, such as Hayek (1948) and Kornai (1994). While they suggest that a mix of the two systems can only lead to “incoherence” and disturbances that bring high social costs to the transition, Chongqing’s case proves that prosperity can be enhanced and shared by socialist commitments to the well-being of people making the transition from rural to urban livelihoods. Furthermore, if China follows more farmer-friendly, people-oriented pattern of urbanization, as informed by Chongqing’s case, a return of China’s political economy from state capitalism to a socialist market economy could be affirmed, thus addressing on-going debates about China’s possible future political transformation.

In the case of left-behind women’s empowerment in agriculture, even though they are more empowered than their non-left-behind counterparts, they still face substantial gender inequality both inside and outside of their families, as shown through careful analysis of a pilot application of the WEAI in Northeastern China. On one hand, by focusing on rural women’s agency, this chapter fills a research gap by revealing left-behind women’s proactive coping strategies in the absence of their husbands, while transforming an existing negative conceptualization of them to a more positive one. On the other hand, based on the gendered division of labor within the household, women are more likely to be left behind in the agricultural sector, which has lower economic returns than urban sectors. Furthermore, the fact that being left behind enables women to gain autonomy in agriculture proves women’s inferior positions to men within their households. However, it is clear from the WEAI results that, if provided with enabling policy settings or positive opportunity structures, rural women are more likely to become proactive agents who make strategic choices in agriculture, as well as for their own and family livelihoods.

Ultimately, given that urbanization is promoted nationally and will continue to be a necessary pathway for China to achieve higher economic performance, inclusive urbanization cannot be sustained by separating family members between rural and urban areas. China needs to improve opportunities for gender equality and integrate rural women into the urbanization process, an issue which is still too-often overlooked in mainstream literature. Furthermore, this study also provides an analytical framework to promote and evaluate possible empowerment of farmers and to initiate inclusive and sustainable urbanization that also integrates gender

empowerment into it, identifying potential opportunities to support women's empowerment under current conditions, an approach which is often overlooked in existing studies on inclusive and sustainable urbanization.

4.3 Policy implications

In view of the analyses above, the following policy implications apply.

To begin with, the national government may consider setting alternative urbanization objectives, including supporting opportunities for social, economic and intergenerational integration in its long-term policy agenda. In this way, it may generate a more inclusive and open policy environment, under which local states could be encouraged to decentralize power in greater cooperation with farmers, and farming households could be empowered to realize their self-autonomy by making use of state policy programs. Given that the emergence and benefits of the Household Contract Responsibility System (HCRS) were due to the openness of policy environment at that time, it may also be expected that an inclusive policy mood at the national level is the first step for promoting China's capacity for people-oriented urbanization.

Second, considering the complexity of steering China's land-driven urbanization in a more people-oriented direction, governments may need to recognize the value in applying holistic and systematic approaches to their policy design and implementation. The rationale lies in an alternative urbanization policy framework that systemically claims inclusive development, sustained growth, gender equity, and actively supports women's empowerment. Without a more systematic approach to alternative urbanization in China, female farmers may be subjected to further marginalization through structural gender inequalities that remain unaddressed. Without full integration of farmers and specific attention to the empowerment of women in urbanization, the benefits of inclusive development cannot be achieved. As shown in the case study of Chongqing, an umbrella of coordinated policies designed to promote hukou and land tenure reform in the context of greater commitment to social integration of migrants and farmers has proven stronger in securing sustainable prosperity than the common practice in other provinces and cities. The systematic approach adopted in Chongqing requires local governments to have a more comprehensive understanding of the policy issues and the needs of all stakeholders involved, developing greater accountabilities to more people, particularly farming families, and developing pragmatic mechanisms for achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

Third, given that the state continues to play a strong role in China's urbanization, policy designed to facilitate farmers' integration into their urban destinations rather than enforcement of rural/urban boundaries through administrative orders, may help sustain overall economic growth. As shown in Chapters two and three, farmers, including left-behind women in particular, can become their own agents and adapt well to new conditions during socioeconomic transformation. Policies that address and support the needs of farmers, both men and women, are more likely to lead to positive policy outcomes as shown in previous policy cases, such as HCRS and relaxation of hukou constraints in 1984.

Lastly, non-governmental organizations can provide useful supplementary methods to governmental action and can play key roles in promoting gender equality and facilitating women's empowerment. The All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) is the most influential arms-length governmental organization that focuses exclusively on improving women's well-being and welfare across China. Compared to the state, the ACWF is more responsive and accountable to women's affairs, due to its mission, harmonizing agenda and organizational structure. The ACWF can help bridge greater understanding across national, provincial, institutional and public contexts by holding conferences, seminars, and workshops in cooperation with academics and community leaders to emphasize the benefits of gender equity in development. Clearly, this will require mobilization of intersectional gender equity training in academic and school environments as well. In this way, gender equality has a better chance to be integrated into public and policy discourses, thus producing positive changes toward all women and those left-behind in particular. Furthermore, considering ACWF's legitimate political positioning and its vast networks at all levels of administrative districts, it is a good vehicle to provide social programs, training sessions and other forms of supportive programming to raise women's self-recognition as agents in the context of China's ongoing development.

4.4 Limitations and future research

This dissertation highlights empowerment as a central component of an alternative policy structure for urbanization in China. Hence, several limitations also apply. Future studies that integrate an alternative urbanization framework may address these limitations.

First, the construction of this study is guided by Friedmann's (1992) framework of alternative development; thus some limitations of that framework are also present in the current study. More specifically, Friedmann's (1992) framework offers a synthesis of claims advocating

alternative development centered on empowerment of people as a departure from mainstream economic ideologies. The arguments he developed are built on case studies in Latin America, thus limiting its wider application in other contexts. Consequently, Friedmann's (1992) claims are more like a set of over-arching objectives rather than a site-specific road map to achieving alternative development. This study borrows key ideas from Friedman's framework, developing empirical evidence that supports empowerment as a viable model for urbanization and development in China. However, the supporting evidence is constrained by limited study size and data availability. More in-depth empirical studies in China or other Asian countries are also needed to confirm the validity and relevance of Friedman's alternative urbanization framework in different political and social contexts.

Second, due to the constraints of available resources and data, the results of the two chapters need to be interpreted cautiously. The second chapter applies the case study research method. As a research approach, case studies face challenges of selection bias and lack of generalization. The unique position of Chongqing makes the case study even more context-specific, thus weakening its capacity to shed light on practices in other regions. To remedy this disadvantage, more case studies of China's pilot reforms in hukou and land systems, such as at Shenzhen and Beijing, should be conducted and compared with Chongqing's case. Meanwhile, in the case of Chongqing, a large scale survey, investigating farmers' decisions and associated responses to institutional reforms, could be conducted to test Chongqing's implicit empowerment structure in quantitative and qualitative terms.

The results from Chapter three are not nationally representative and the sample size is small relative to practices and results in other countries. Thus, the conclusions may be inconsistent with results from other regions within China. Meanwhile, due to the lack of longitudinal data and documents, other factors that may cause left-behind women's (dis) empowerment cannot be examined. Thus, whether left-behind women's current empowerment is a process of development in other areas is missing. A national survey with random and sufficient samples is needed to verify the evidence generated in this study. Furthermore, due to the exclusive focus on women's roles in agriculture necessitated by using the WEAI, biased conclusions may arise by excluding women in other occupations. Thus, if possible, an alternative index measuring women's empowerment in other fields, such as specific labor markets, should be built.

Third, even though a greater understanding of left-behind women's empowerment in agriculture may be transferable to other vulnerable groups of farmers, enabling them to be empowered also, there is a disconnection between China's inclusive urbanization and female farmers' experiences during the urbanization process. This is due to the fact that most of the policy documentation and surveys are imagined to be gender blind, which makes it difficult to measure women's agency and capacity for adaptation during China's processes of urbanization, directly. Following Chongqing's case, future studies focusing on female farmers' experiences during the current urbanization process may provide insights into how gender relations within the household affect women's adaptation to urbanization relative to men. Furthermore, given that the All-China Women Federation has close connections with all levels of governments and directly addresses women's needs and welfare, a study that examines the impact of ACWF's programs on left-behind women's empowerment in agriculture, as measured by WEAI, may provide other non-governmental organizations, as well as governments, with guidance.

TABLE A.1

Table A.1: Disempowerment Decomposed by Dimension and Indicator (Left-behind household)										
Statistics	Production		Resources			Income	Leadership		Time	
	Input in productive decisions	Autonomy in production	Ownership of assets	Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets	Access to and decisions on credit	Control over use of income	Group member	Speaking in public	Work burden	Leisure time
WOMEN										
Censored Headcount/Population	0.057	0.038	0.019	0.057	0.396	0.038	0.302	0.132	0.321	0.019
% Contribution	4.50%	3.00%	1.00%	3.00%	21.00%	6.00%	24.00%	10.50%	25.50%	1.50%
Contribution	0.006	0.004	0.001	0.004	0.026	0.008	0.030	0.013	0.032	0.002
% Contr. by dimension	7.5%		25.0%			6.0%	34.5%		27.0%	
MEN										
Censored Headcount/Population	0.173	0.077	0.000	0.038	0.288	0.058	0.308	0.077	0.058	0.058
% Contribution	15.98%	7.10%	0.000	2.37%	17.75%	10.65%	28.40%	7.10%	5.33%	5.33%
Contribution	0.017	0.008	0.000	0.003	0.019	0.012	0.031	0.008	0.006	0.006
% Contr. by dimension	23.1%		20.1%			10.7%	35.5%		10.7%	

TABLE B.1

Table B.1: Disempowerment Decomposed by Dimension and Indicator (Non-left-behind household)										
Statistics	Production		Resources		Income		Leadership		Time	
	Input in productive decisions	Autonomy in production	Ownership of assets	Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets	Access to and decisions on credit	Control over use of income	Group member	Speaking in public	Work burden	Leisure time
WOMEN										
Censored Headcount/Population	0.099	0.148	0.000	0.160	0.580	0.111	0.432	0.160	0.321	0.111
% Contribution	4.97%	7.45%	0.000	5.38%	19.46%	11.18%	21.74%	8.07%	16.15%	5.59%
Contribution	0.012	0.016	0.000	0.013	0.037	0.023	0.044	0.015	0.029	0.010
% Contr. by dimension	12.4%		24.8%		11.2%		29.8%		21.7%	
MEN										
Censored Headcount/Population	0.000	0.071	0.000	0.024	0.224	0.118	0.200	0.047	0.035	0.047
% Contribution	0.000	8.82%	0.000	1.96%	18.63%	29.41%	25.00%	5.88%	4.41%	5.88%
Contribution	0.000	0.007	0.000	0.002	0.015	0.024	0.020	0.005	0.004	0.005
% Contr. by dimension	8.8%		20.6%		29.4%		30.9%		10.3%	

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